SPECIAL EDITION

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MACLEAN'S

DEC. 15th 2008



NEWSMAKERS '08

THIS YEAR'S LEADERS AND LOSERS, REBELS AND ROGUES, HEROES AND HALFWITS



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11:51 a.m. This is awkward. There's this kid who's been playing his drum for me for like, ever. Maybe if I smile at him, he'll stop.



TEEN VAMPIRES disproved the notion that literacy among young people is a lost cause

Vampires, presidents and other newsmakers

"I'd never given much thought to how I would die."

If you're a fan, you already know who and what we're talking about. It's the opening line from the novel and movie *Twilight*, which tells the story of a tender but dangerous high school romance between human Bella Swan and vampire Edward Cullen. To the surprise of many, this unlikely pair have become a sensation. In its opening weekend, *Twilight* earned a stunning US$70 million and is already being talked about in the same breath as that other blockbuster about mismatched lovers, *Titanic*. Bella and Edward have become the pop culture newsmakers of the year.

The Newsmakers issue is an annual tradition at *Maclean's*, giving us a chance to look back at the most interesting people in politics, business, the arts, sports and culture. As 2008's Newsmaker of the Year, Barack Obama seems so obvious a selection that he transcends the bounds of our category. Obama is not just a newsmaker, he's a historymaker. The election of a president with a black father and a white mother is a significant moment in the long and difficult history of race and status in the United States. While he faces many challenges, his election has awakened a new instinct for public service among young Americans and provides a welcome note of optimism for the entire world.

Twilight's success is similarly gratifying. While Bella's contemplation of her own death is proven premature, the success of the book and movie is proving claims of the demise of literacy among teenagers to be equally rash.

Since 2005, *Twilight* author Stephenie Meyer has sold over 25 million copies of her four-book series, with more on the way. As well, there are an estimated 300 fan sites across the Internet. The overwhelming popularity of the books, particularly among young females, is what made the movie such a phenomenon. So how do we square this with conventional wisdom that laments a lack of reading among young adults?

Quite simply, *Twilight*, like the *Harry Potter* series before it, proves conventional wisdom wrong. Teenagers and young adults have not lost their interest in reading. Like everyone else, they have a greater range of leisure activities competing for their attention. But young readers continually prove they'll forsake video games and chat rooms to sit down and read—in fact, they'll line up just for the chance to buy so they can sit down and read—books that appeal to them. Put a good story in front of a young reader and they will engage to the point of obsessiveness. Vampires or not, the kids are all right.

Finally, it's another tradition at *Maclean's* to recognize the hard-working team responsible for the Newsmakers issue. This year's package is our largest ever and Kate Fillion, Patricia Treble, Una Janicijevic, Richard Redditt, Stephen Gregory, Sean McCluskey, Jared Mitchell, Susan Mohammad and Ronit Novak all deserve congratulations for their witty, perceptive and comprehensive take on the year just ending. Of course, they'll have little time to rest on their laurels. In a few weeks work begins on 2009's Newsmakers issue. M

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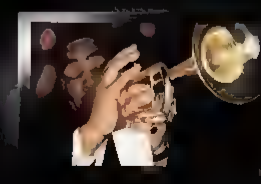
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THE POWER OF LIGHT

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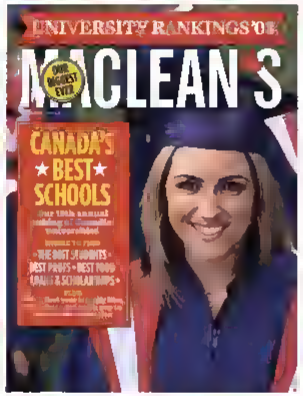
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'Surely Andrew Coyne would not inflict upon us the insult of weekly debates'

WELL-SCHOOLED

AS A GRADE 10 STUDENT, I am aware that I need to start thinking about my university choices, I picked up a lot of useful information while I was reading your 18th annual ranking of Canadian universities (University Rankings, Nov. 24). That being said, what about students, like myself, who are considering attending a university overseas? You are doing an excellent job of providing information on Canadian universities, but I think you should include some American and overseas schools as well.
Breanna Kehoe, St. Catharines, Ont.



SANDY FARRAN'S ARTICLE painted parents as "the biggest obstacle" when students are considering enrolling in a community college program as an alternative to university life ("Consider the college alternative"). I would suggest that the mainstream media has done little to highlight the benefits and significant career opportunities for students who complete a college education. My husband and I, both university and college graduates, have gone on to have fulfilling careers. We encourage our teenagers to keep their minds open when thinking about post-secondary education and not rule out the many opportunities that lie inside the doors of a community college. Why not run a similar edition of your magazine with a focus on community colleges?
Marlene Chumak, Brampton, Ont.

ERIN MILLAR'S STORY gave a good view of Quest University Canada, Canada's first non-profit, secular, private university ("Noble Quest"). The story was largely accurate, but missed a few elements. The tuition level of $24,500 is offset very significantly in the business plan by a substantial scholarship component. This makes Quest much more affordable than it appears. Enrolment has been less than hoped for, but it is growing steadily. At 80 per cent, the conversion rate of students from first year to second year is far above the norm in most universities. As the article observes, the faculty, staff, students, parents and the new management are incredibly committed and dedicated to this unique institution.
D.W. Strangway, Founder, Past President and Past Chancellor, Quest University Canada, Kelowna, B.C.

I WAS SURPRISED that Scouting wasn't mentioned in your article about how extracurricular efforts can strengthen a job application ("Resume builders"). Randy Pausch, in his book *The Last Lecture*, mentions that he almost earned the level of "Eagle Scout" (or the "Chief Scout Award" here in Canada), and regretted not getting it. He points out that the Eagle Scout is one of the only things you can accomplish at age 15 that can still legitimately be put on a job application when you're 30. During my career, I often had occasion to review job applications. Any that had "Chief Scout Award recipient" listed automatically made it through the first scan to receive additional consideration. They were always good candidates, and good people.
John Barker, Sarnia, Ont.

WHENEVER you put out the University Rankings issue, inevitably, you have a young, beautiful Caucasian woman on the front. What does this project? That university students must be young, beautiful Caucasian women. That sex sells. That we are not a multicultural country. That males, people of colour and minorities, as well as the aged population, don't have as much legitimacy. But, surely, the latter groups make up the majority of the student population. Why not represent them? This is not about political correctness—it's about demographic accuracy.
Michael Turcotte, Wasaga Beach, Ont.

I'M NOT THE LEAST bit surprised that students at universities are unprepared, lacking basic math skills and, in some cases, scoring



DION PHANEUF Calgary Flames defenseman



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at a Grade 6 level or lower on math placement tests ("Ready or not"). I taught until 1994, and I did not allow my math students to use calculators because, if they did, they wouldn't understand the concept of the problem they were solving. I observed students outside of my class who used calculators all the time. I noticed that although they could punch in the figures and then hit the sine, cosine or tangent buttons, they really did not understand the functions. They scraped through their exams but did not master the information.

Ann Zelter, Lampman, Sask.

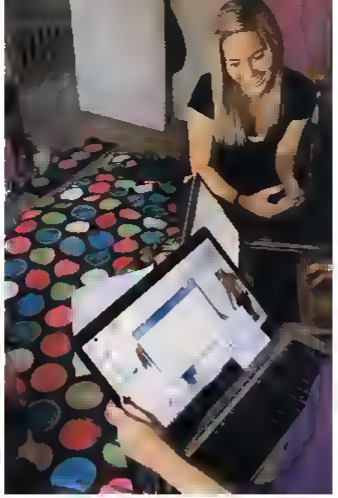
PUT DOWN THE GADGETS

THANK YOU so much for Lianne George's article about the adverse affects of technology on our kids' brains ("Dumbed down," Education, Nov. 17). I have two teenagers and it seems inevitable that they will be affected by this to some degree. Fortunately for us, we have been lucky to keep them interested and involved in a lot of extracurricular sports and outside activities. They are currently annoyed at me for, amongst other parental intrusions, making them read George's article and write, by hand, an essay on how these issues apply to their lives. I want them to understand that technology is a tool—it is not life. Hopefully this article will help to start reorienting our kids' attention to real life in time for them to enjoy it and in time for us all to benefit.

Mike Thompson, Courtice, Ont.

THIS STORY HIGHLIGHTS the concerns that many of my fellow teachers and I share about the positive and negative impacts of technology on learning. The Web and computers are fabulous tools for society and educators, but they are tools, not substitutes for deep, reasoned thought. You mention Don Tapscott in your story, who, in his book *Grown Up Digital. How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*, sees technology as developing new ways of finding, synthesizing and communicating information. Finding, yes, new ways of communicating, probably; but synthesizing—no! People synthesize ideas, machines don't. Intelligence is far more than the regurgitation of facts. Intelligence involves the ability to analyze, synthesize, hypothesize and apply knowledge. Many students in this generation have difficulty classifying information, making inferences, summarizing and, especially, synthesizing ideas into a cohesive whole. To do this requires attentive interaction with sources and deep reflection, which is the antithesis of the "continuous partial attention" we see every day in our classrooms. Possible solutions? For educators: keep teaching critical thinking skills. For students: put aside the gadgets for a while and pay attention.

Judith Powell, Victoria



'COMPUTERS are not substitutes for thinking'

PHOTOGRAPH BY COLE GARSIDE

ELECTION REFLECTIONS

ANDREW COYNE is on to something with his suggestions for electoral reform ("A tinpot Parliament voted in by a tiny minority," Opinion, Nov. 24). It's probably not a stretch to argue future voter turnout will continue to decline until or unless something along the lines of his suggestions is implemented, whether it's holding weekly debates, abolishing taxpayer funding of campaigns, or making voting mandatory. The time for talk is up, though; voter turnout has been steadily dwindling, and with it, credibility in the system. It matters less what action is chosen as long as something is done to address the malaise.

David Moffat, Ottawa

SURELY ANDREW COYNE would not inflict upon us the insult of "regular debates, one a week at least" of the kind we suffered during the last election? Debates, yes, but ones that would follow rules of order for debate and would rigorously enforce respectful exchanges instead of the back alley brawls we have seen that only suit the bullies.

Jerry Marek, Minitonas, Man.

COYNE CALLS making voting compulsory, like the Australians have done, a "crude but effective remedy." Under the Australian system, voting is simply another of the duties or obligations of citizenship. It results in a much fairer representation than we have in Canada with our first-past-the-post system. Under the Australian system, every citizen has to make a choice, and that choice can be for the candidates in preferential order or for none of the candidates—all democratic options are covered. Penalties for not voting are not cheap and are sufficient to create an interest among the electorate in the process and in the result. I hardly think that this is "crude," particularly when compared to the Canadian methodology.

Alan Sperling, Toronto

COMPLAINTS ABOUT the evils of the Canadian parliamentary system and its first-past-the-post elections are the sort of things that crop up after every federal election. The real problem with our current system is that we have too many parties for effective legislation. The fringes have too much power and the entire country is always held hostage by the whims of a single region interested only in itself. Low voter turnout is also not a problem. It ensures that Parliament is elected by those who care. To force a lot of spoiled ballots serves no one. As Yogi Berra succinctly observed, "If the fans don't come out to the ballpark, you can't stop them."

Alexander McKay, Calgary

LOST IN TRANSLATION

AS I SIT HERE in my home in Santiago, Chile, doing yet another Spanish homework assignment, I am intrigued by Jason Kirby's article on cracking the universal translation device ("The quest for better understanding," Technology, Nov. 3). My family and I have been in Chile for one year now, and while we have learned plenty of Spanish with various teachers, books and courses, an electronic translator will never be enough to learn the intricacies of this beautiful language. The history of Chilean Spanish is difficult enough to learn (and is very different from other Spanish, say Peruvian or Costa Rican) from a local, as the history of the words go back to the Mapuche people and that group is long gone. As in English, the Chileans have many slang words or meanings that are not in any dictionary, nor are they translatable. All the same, kudos to the developers for trying to create a device that could actually decode a language. If it makes a difference for some people, that is a good thing.

Brenda Norfolk, Santiago, Chile



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MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON A VERY FUNNY HARPER AND GETTING DROPPED FROM DAD'S XMAS CARD

HE COVERED MAN'S DISCOVERY OF FIRE

CTV journalistic legend **Craig Oliver**'s 70th birthday bash was the Ottawa equivalent of the Academy Awards in terms of political star power. The event packed the Fairmont Château Laurier ballroom and raised $100,000 for the **W. Bruce Jackson** Endowment for Fellowships in Ophthalmology at the University of Ottawa. (Oliver is legally blind.) **Stephen Harper** delivered a hilarious speech in which he recalled the time Oliver actually reported a fire on the Liberal campaign plane he was on during the 2000 election. A CTV colleague had to tell Oliver the fire was a red flashing light on the wing. The PM humorously noted several historic moments Oliver had "covered," including **Samuel de Champlain**'s landing in Quebec "and who can forget that first broadcast with **Lloyd Robertson** on [man's] discovery of fire." Former prime minister **Jean Chrétien** also delivered a superb roast. "Now I can speak up because I don't give a damn what you report." Oliver, the triple-majority PM recalled, once told Chrétien he was too old and "yesterday's man" when he wanted to run for the Liberal leadership in 1990. Later on, Chrétien told Oliver he would retire as PM before he was 70 and he did. "Now tonight we are celebrating Craig's 70th birthday and he's *still* here." Also in attendance at the fundraiser was the triumvirate of new top female cabinet ministers **Leona Aglukkaq**, **Lisa Raitt** and **Gail Shea**. Liberal stars included **Justin Trudeau**, **Allan Rock**, **Bob Rae** and **Michael Ignatieff**, whose wife, **Zsuzsanna Zsohar**, said that when she first arrived in Ottawa and needed a good eye doctor, Oliver called his own specialist and got her in. "All for a complete stranger," she said. CTV colleague **Rosemary Thompson** says Oliver has "the best Rolodex in the city. If you need to confirm something, he is better than Google because he can get real people to confirm at the highest levels." In a moving moment, the House's sergeant-at-arms, **Kevin Vickers**, presented Oliver with the flag that flew atop the Peace Tower on his actual 70th birthday.



JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Jean Chrétien, Allan Rock model joke glasses from Craig Oliver event gift bags; Zsuzsanna Zsohar (middle left), Liam McGuinty (middle right); Leona Aglukkaq (below, left), Scott Brison (below, right), (insets) Craig Oliver; Dalton McGuinty

THE NEW McGUINTY

Ontario Premier **Dalton McGuinty**'s son **Liam McGuinty**, 24, is working as a legislative assistant to Montreal Liberal MP **Marlene Jennings**. At 12 years of age, Liam attended his father's leadership convention. "I don't think we realized how much he wasn't supposed to win because he's your dad and in your head you always figure he's invincible." For years after his father became an MPP in 1990, Liam always appeared on his father's Christmas cards; he says the kids dropped off the card about three years ago "when we weren't cute enough to be on it," he jokes. Premier McGuinty holds the same seat his father held from 1987 to 1990 in premier **David Peterson**'s caucus before his death from a heart attack. Liam recounts the family lore that his father and uncles got together after their father's passing to decide which would run in his place, "and my dad said, 'My name's already on the signs.'" (Premier McGuinty's father was Dalton Sr.) Liam has completed a B.A. in political science and says his dad never pushed politics on him. He impressed Jennings because, she says, he was "confident, not arrogant," and did his homework. "He was already up to speed on what my positions are on a whole series of issues. If I had a son I would love him to be like Liam." When they first met on the Hill, Justin Trudeau said to him "we should talk about what it's like to be famous politicians' sons." Liam says he "kinda laughed," before telling Justin, "I think your experience has been a little bit different than mine."

HE SURE LIKES XMAS

Scott Brison has had his Christmas tree up and decorated since the end of November. Each year he buys a live Austrian pine from somewhere in his riding. "It spends winter in the house and then in the spring it's planted outside," says the Nova Scotia Liberal MP.

ON THE WEB: For more Ottawa outtakes or to contact Mitchel Raphael, visit **macleans.ca/mitchelrepheel**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCHEL RAPHAEL

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☐ ...um
☐ ...uh
☐ ...hmm

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Licensed to negotiate: a 007 for the new global era



PAUL WELLS

"Many critics poured cold water on *'Quantum of Solace,'* complaining that filmmakers strayed too far from the franchise's signature story elements. The movie depicts a bitter and emotional 007 seeking revenge for the death of a lover. Assisted by a Russian-Bolivian agent (Olga Kurylenko), he stops a criminal (Mathieu Amalric) from taking control of a country's water supply."

—*New York Times*

Dear Colleagues:

Just a quick note to update you all on our work with the Bond franchise. I've just returned from lunch with Mitch and Murray and I can tell you, they are *very* happy with the way this new Bond is going! Thanks to all of your hard work, we have a new, tough, no-non sense Bond who's ready for the grittier, more realistic stories audiences demand in these worrying times. Where do we go from here? Onward! Forward! Upward! That's where. No looking back, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is not your dad's James Bond any more.

With *Quantum of Solace* we showed we can turn an issue as complex as Bolivian water privatization into a sexy, fast-paced adventure for Agent 007. We don't need underwater crime lord headquarters or orbiting laser fortresses to hold the attention of today's sophisticated audiences. Daniel Craig is long past having to prove his ability to handle the most subtle public-policy challenges. And get a load of those pecs! Also, despite a title some lowbrow critics found "difficult," *Quantum of Solace* sold boatloads of tickets.

So what's next? Here are plot sketches for the next few Bond movies. I don't have to remind you this information is Top Secret—and Mitch and Murray have a licence to kill!

1. *On Her Majesty's Lumbar Spinal Stenosis.* Bond travels to Canada where he has the devil's own time getting an appointment with a specialist to treat M's back pains. Our hero is astonished to learn that the Harper government's health-care wait times guarantee was never implemented after the 2006 election and that the relevant minister, a shadowy figure known only as "Tony Clement," was promoted after the next election. Bond tracks Clement to Washington where the minister discusses a bailout for the automobile industry. In a subplot, the bitter and emotional 007 pauses from seeking revenge for Vesper's murder long enough to bed a willowy lobbyist for the Canadian Renewable Fuels Association.

2. *From Brussels with Love.* Bond tracks a contract killer to the Belgian capital, where he gets caught up in an argument about European Union rules of origin for imports. When Bond discovers his application for Binding Origin Information is lacking the requisite composition of the goods and any methods of examination used to determine this and their ex works price, as necessary, he beds a scheduling assistant for the Latvian head of mission to NATO and shoots a waiter who mocks him for confusing the Belgian national anthem with *La Marseillaise*.



Bond battles a shadowy figure known only as 'Tony Clement,' then beds a willowy lobbyist

3. *The World is Not Enough, Especially the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Bits.* During a break from the foundering Doha trade talks, Bond beds a willowy Belgian waitress and gets into an argument with M, who wants to curtail rampant abuses that allow trade-restrictive anti-dumping remedies to punish normal import competition. A car chase follows, and Bond breaks up a plot by the Canadian delegation to punt on supply management. A willowy Bloc Quebecois agriculture researcher beds him in gratitude. He remains bitter and emottional.

4. *A View to a BlackBerry Storm.* On his way into a Starbucks in Hanover, Md., for a vente latte, Bond overhears two young Democratic congressional aides comparing the features of their new PDAs. "I like mine because it has the clickable touch screen, so you really feel it when you type something," one says. "Mine's got 3G, and when I look up a place on Google Maps these giant cartoon push-pins drop onto the map," the other says. "It's *wicked*." Bond kills them both with a coffee stir stick.

5. *Arctopussy.* On a training exchange with the Danish Secret Service (motto: "Spying Takes a Lot Out of You. Eat Some Herring"), Bond becomes embroiled in the debate with Canada, Norway, Russia and the United States over the future of Hans Island. During particularly delicate negotiations over plans to strengthen existing measures and to develop new measures to improve the safety of maritime navigation and prevent or reduce the risk of ship based pollution in the Arctic Ocean, Bond runs out of hard disk space to save a Microsoft Excel chart. A willowy Norwegian tech-support staffer is no help at all. "Sorry, bud. Vista sucks."

6. *A Quantum of Greenhouse-Gas Emission.* Bond travels with Stéphane Dion and Arnold Schwarzenegger to a conference on carbon cap-and-trade mechanisms. "The scale, costs and institutional arrangements required to create and run them generally preclude regional natural resource management (NRM) groups from using them directly as an NRM policy tool," Bond tells a willowy database management specialist from Gujarat. There is a car chase. Bond remains bitter and emotional. M

ON THE WEB For more Paul Wells, visit his blog at **macleans.ca/inklesswells**

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN GREGORY



Never let a good economic crisis go to waste



ANDREW COYNE

Mon centre cède, ma droite recule. Situation excellente, j'attaque!—Marshal Foch

Coverage of the economy is shrouded in gloom at the best of times, on the principle described by the American journalist Gregg Easterbrook. All Economic News is Bad. News is change; change helps some, hurts others; the ones it hurts are the ones we hear from, ergo, AENIB.

But if the present crisis offers more than the usual opportunities to wallow in despair, it should also be a reminder of the corollary to Easterbrook's law: All Economic News is Also Good. Though each day's newspaper seems to bring worse reports than the last, it is nevertheless true that it brings reasons to hope as well. One boom may be ending. But the seeds are already being planted for the next.

As the economist Herb Stein was fond of saying, if something "cannot go on forever," it will eventually stop. Throughout the boom, the louder it got and the longer it went on, the clang of doom was sounding—that sense that we were storing up trouble, that the imbalances and excesses in the system would eventually have to be corrected. It haunted us, whether we admitted it or not. Even as we were indulging ourselves, living beyond our means, racking up debt, borrowing against assets we knew to be overpriced, we all knew that it would have to end badly—that this time there would be no soft landing.

But we couldn't stop, and neither could the policy makers. The party had gone on much too long to take away the punch bowl. Everyone was paralyzed by the fear of what was to come, of the carnage that would follow if—when—the boom ever ended. And so no one did anything, or nothing that would really get at the problem at its roots.

But now the worst has happened, the crisis is really upon us, and there is no avoiding it any longer. Which ought to be ... liberating. We do not have to govern out of fear any longer. There is nothing to be lost, and everything to be gained, from tackling policy changes that previously we would have avoided. We might wish it hadn't come to this, but now that it has, well, to have no choice is a kind of freedom. The way is open to us to build the next boom on a more durable foundation.

An example. One of the contributing factors to the U.S. housing bubble that underlay and eventually precipitated the crisis was the perverse American policy of allowing homeowners to deduct the interest payments on their mortgage from their income taxes. It is one of the two or three worst policies since the building of the pyramids, a direct subsidy to indebtedness (without making housing more affordable: all that subsidized borrowing only served to drive up house prices, in effect capitalizing the value of the subsidy).

We wish it hadn't come to this, but the next boom will be built on a stronger foundation



MAX WHITTAKER/REUTERS

Everyone who knew anything about policy knew it was madness. But it could never be changed, since, as everyone knew, that would cause the housing market to collapse, and no politician dared risk the wrath of home owners that would ensue. Well, now it's collapsed anyway. So the opportunity presents itself at last to be rid of mortgage interest deductibility.

As the example suggests, policy paralysis of the type I have described is not only a matter of timid politicians. It is also arises from the accumulation over time of politically powerful interest groups in and around government, each with a deep stake in the status quo. In his 1965 book *The Logic of Collective Action*, and with greater historic sweep in 1982's *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, the economist Mancur Olson analyzed how societies that enjoy long periods of peace and prosperity inevitably become encrusted with interest-group privileges, leading to stagnation and decline. The reverse is also true, Olson argued: it was no accident that postwar Germany grew faster than any other European country, and it had nothing to do with the Marshall Plan. Rather, having been laid flat, literally and figuratively, by the war, Germany had a free hand to remake its economy, unconstrained by the sort of entrenched interests that proved so intractable in, say, postwar Britain. One needn't wish for crises to acknowledge they can have beneficial effects.

This has nothing to do with paranoid theories of "disaster capitalism," as in Naomi Klein's lefty fantasy: the notion that free-market economists are a breed of geopolitical ambulance chasers, exploiting catastrophes, natural or economic, to foist unpopular policies on unwilling populaces. In the face of a calamity, it is hardly dishonourable to suggest policies you sincerely believe will help—indeed, it would seem obligatory—nor, as we have seen, is the practice confined to the right. Rahm Emanuel, Barack Obama's chief of staff, has been much quoted to the effect that no good crisis should be allowed to go to waste.

No decent person would deliberately impose measures that were harmful to the public interest, just as no democrat would persist on a course that the majority, given a vote, rejected. But there is a difference between the public interest and the special interest, and majority rule is not simply the sum of interest-group demands. If the present crisis liberates politicians to do things in the public interest they would previously have feared to do, that is all to the good.

Or as it has been said: what do you do when you have painted yourself into a corner? You walk out onto the paint. M

ON THE WEB: For more Andrew Coyne, visit his blog at **macleans.ca/andrewcoyne**

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'We don't know, all else equal, if having same-race kids together is a good idea. It would be a wonderful thing to test.'

ECONOMIST ROLAND FRYER TALKS TO KATE FILLION ABOUT BLACKS, WHITES, OBAMA AND THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY

Every article and press release about you mentions that you're 30, and the youngest African-American ever to get tenure at Harvard. And because of a magazine article a few years back, some really personal details—your parents' failings, your own youthful drug dealing, your beloved great-aunt and uncle running a crack cocaine business—are now public. Do you wish that weren't the case?

A: I'm so glad it's out there. Obama did this as well. If you get it out there, I think the American public is . . . "forgiving" isn't the right word, I don't know if I need to be forgiven for anything, but now I don't have to hide anything. And it actually makes me relate to the kids [I study] in inner-city schools in a real way, a lot of them are dealing with the issues, unfortunately, that my background describes.

Q: *What do you make of the fact that Obama recently called himself a "mutt," but is rarely referred to in the media as mixed-race?*

A: Same thing with Tiger Woods. This has been happening in American media for many years, that if you've got a certain amount of black blood in you, you're considered black. My grandfather on my mother's side was, I believe, either mixed himself or a white man, and everyone calls me black. I think this is just what they called, back in the day, the one drop rule.

Q: *In the U.S., the median black household income is about US$32,000, compared to about US$50,000 for whites. There's an achievement gap, academically, between black and white kids. Young black men are more likely to be in prison than college, and on average, blacks die five years earlier than whites. Why does racial inequality persist?*

A: That's the million-dollar question. The truth is, we don't know. Some will say it's discrimination, some will say it's the historical legacy of slavery, some will say it's because of the culture and behaviour of people now. Genetics is another theory. I try not to make any large generalizations. What my research does is to put all these theories on the table and try to eliminate them, one by one. The scientific method allows the data to do the talking and our biases to be kept to a minimum.

Q: *You're an economist and the CEO of the new Education Innovation Laboratory at Harvard, which is all about scientific rigour and has attracted multi-millions in funding. It's hard to believe a research and development agency for education didn't already exist.*

A: It's funny you say that, because every other company that tries to appeal to 12- and 13-year olds has huge buildings full of R&D people! Nike, Motorola, MTV—that's basically where I got the idea from.

Q: *You've said education is "the civil rights battleground of the 21st century." What are the battle lines?*

A: I think battle lines are drawn [around] who the sacred cows in the system are going to be. For me, there's only one sacred cow: the children. I don't know if unions are the problem, but I am not wed to unions. I don't know if the current curriculum is the problem, or if the structure of the school day or how we organize the days across the year are the problem, or if 30 kids in the classroom is good, but I'm not wed to any of that. My only constituency is children. We have 15 million kids in the United States who are not reading at grade level.

Q: *Let's talk about the racial achievement gap. In a study a few years ago, you decided to test the argument that perhaps blacks are genetically predisposed to lower intelligence, and found that no, black and white babies are about equal. When does a testing gap begin to appear?*

A: Age 2 or 3, we don't know why. It could be things like nutrition. We know, for example, that diet differs substantially between racial groups and especially among income groups. We also know that reading to your kids and doing mathematical puzzles with your kids at age 2 to 3 matters a lot. A complicated genetic story that doesn't appear early but somehow appears late could be another reason there's an achievement gap around age 3.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE SIMON

Q: *Was socio-economic class a mitigating factor?*

A: It was a mitigating factor, but there's a big misconception out there that somehow income is more important than race for these test scores, and it's just not true. Typically in these studies, socio-economic status would knock out about one third of the gap, the two-thirds remaining is wholly a function of race.

Q: *As black kids grow up, what happens to that difference you see at age 3?*

A: It expands. Year by year, black kids fall behind their white counterparts, regardless of socio-economic class.

Q: *By high school, how big is the achievement gap?*

A: Huge. Graduation rates are wildly different, in urban areas, around 50 per cent of our kids are graduating, and when you look just at black males, the percentages are even less. And in the SATs, essentially the entrance exam to our elite universities, there's barely any overlapping distribution of scores. It's a little over one standard deviation difference between blacks and whites.

Q: *In a study that looked at more than 90,000 kids, you found that black kids who get good grades are less likely to be popular than their same-race peers who get middling grades. Why is there social punishment for what you call "acting white"?*

A: Scientifically, I don't know the answer, but my hunch is that it stems back to the fact that in the '50s, all the successful blacks—the lawyers, doctors, dentists—lived in the same neighbourhood [as less successful blacks did] because unfortunately, there weren't that many other opportunities. With civil rights and the Fair Housing Act, you start to see successful blacks move out of the neighbourhood, so education became a predictor of whether or not you were going to be around. I think there's just been this "Are you with us or against us?" kind of mentality, and I don't think we've fully gotten beyond that. If you go to all-black schools in places like Harlem, for example, you don't find this "acting white" effect [where high-achieving students are less popular]. Where there's integration, that's where we find "acting white" to be most salient.

Q: *So do black kids do better overall in all-black schools? Or is it just that you don't see this "acting white" effect, so kids with good grades are popular?*

A: Exactly, you don't see this effect. Very important distinction, because people have taken my work and argued for segregation, and that was not my intention! Unfortunately, the typical all-black school is also a more impoverished school, so we don't know, all else equal, if having same-race kids together is a good idea. It would be a wonderful thing to test.

Q: *Did you ever experience social repercussions for doing well academically?*

A: Of course. I was a football player, and the coaches used to come through and ask all the players, "Hey, how you doing on your grades?" In Texas, as well as many other states now, if you didn't pass your courses, you couldn't play. I remember the coach coming around one time in high school and saying, "I know *your* grades are okay" and he went on to ask someone else. I told him, "Hey, don't single me out!" I tried to be an athlete and kind of a class clown, to try to take away from the academics. I can also remember accusing people of acting white not only because of education but the clothes they wore, the music they listened to—I mean, if you listened to country music, you were definitely acting white in our high school—which I'm not proud of but it's true.

Q: *Now you're studying pay-for-performance, this idea of giving kids cash rewards or cellphone minutes if they get good grades. Is one of the animating principles of that research to rebrand academic achievement and make it cool?*

A: That was a by-product. The program really was built because when I first showed up at Harvard it was like landing on the moon. I was worried I was not going to be good enough, academically, because I went to public schools, a public college, and here I was, showing up as a professor, supposed to teach kids who'd been in private schools since they were born. It turned out that I just wasn't ready *culturally*. When I went to my first dinner party—of my life!—I saw 10- and 12-year-old kids from the host family sitting around the table. They could see that everyone around the table was held in high esteem they had garnered through education. When the party was over and I was back in my car, I thought, "This isn't fair. We didn't have these examples to light the way." Not just within my own family, but within my own extended network of interactions, I didn't have an example of, "Look, you can go on to college, and here's what you're going to get." So I started thinking about how we can make education more tangible for kids, and make it pay off a little earlier than 10 years down the road.

Q: *So do incentives work?*

A: The New York pilot is a two-year program, and we're just starting in D.C. and Chicago, so we don't have any formal results to report yet. But the kids are engaged, and they're reporting in D.C. that parents are showing up to PTA night more to argue about kids' grades—I think that's a great by-product—because they're being rewarded based on their grades.

Q: *How much resistance was there from educators and parents to the idea of rewarding kids for their grades?*

A: The vast majority of the resistance came from higher-educated, more affluent families that weren't in the schools we were actually going to. CNN did a poll, and 70 per cent of blacks thought this was a good idea, and 50 per cent of whites did. Part of the resistance echoes part of the [problem] with public education: we consult mainly adults, and do things that are comfortable for adults. I think if the answer lay there, we'd already have found it. One thing we're trying to do at EdLabs to push the envelope is to ask children how schools can better serve them. And the most important thing [about pay-for-performance] is that I never met a kid who didn't like it. Though in D.C. a few weeks ago, there was a kid who surprised me. He said, "I don't think we should be paid for school. I think I should pay to come to school, because it's such a valuable resource." I was so impressed. An hour later, we were giving out the first cheques in the auditorium, and this kid's name was called, so I put his cheque in my pocket. He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "You told me you didn't believe you should be paid, so I'd like to honour that." He looked at me in a way that only a 13 year-old could, and said, "I never said that!" M



'The most important thing about pay-for-performance is that I never met a kid who didn't like it'



BORN TO RUN

Leadership hopeful Dominic LeBlanc is 40, but he's the grand old man of the Liberal party

BY JOHN GEDDES • At 40 years of age, Dominic LeBlanc is the youngest candidate, by two decades, for the Liberal Party of Canada's leadership, though the way he talks about the tricks of the MP's trade can make him sound like a crafty old politician. For instance, LeBlanc knows better than to pump more than $10 worth of gas into his tank at a time when he's home in his riding of Beauséjour, N.B. He picked up the habit back in 1991, when his summer job was driving Jean Chrétien around the same rural constituency.

Chrétien had won Beauséjour in a by-election in 1990, and held the seat as Opposition leader until he returned to his Quebec home turf to run in 1993. Even though it was only a way station for him, Chrétien took Beauséjour seriously. So, with LeBlanc at the wheel, he criss-crossed his adopted riding on summer days, drinking beer on the wharf with fishermen, buying a pack of gum or a newspaper at every store, and stopping to take on just a bit of gas, and goodwill, at every possible service station. "He quickly developed friendships," LeBlanc recalled in an interview. "I saw and learned from him the importance of local grassroots politics."

Nobody who has watched LeBlanc carve out a place for himself in the Liberal ranks doubts he's a diligent constituency politician. More than a few party insiders—particularly men in their thirties and forties—also have one-of-the-boys stories about LeBlanc that might feature, say, NHL tickets, fishing trips, or after-dinner cigars. As defining traits, though, these could be limitations to his underdog bid to deny Michael Ignatieff or Bob Rae the party's leadership. Consider the contrast. Ignatieff, 61, was a globe-trotting celebrity intellectual before he jumped into politics, while Rae, 60, is a former Ontario NDP premier with the scars to prove it. LeBlanc's hard-worker, fun-guy image hardly seems enough to vault him into their league.

DURING LEBLANC'S childhood, Paarsan, Trudaau and Chrétian were familiar figures

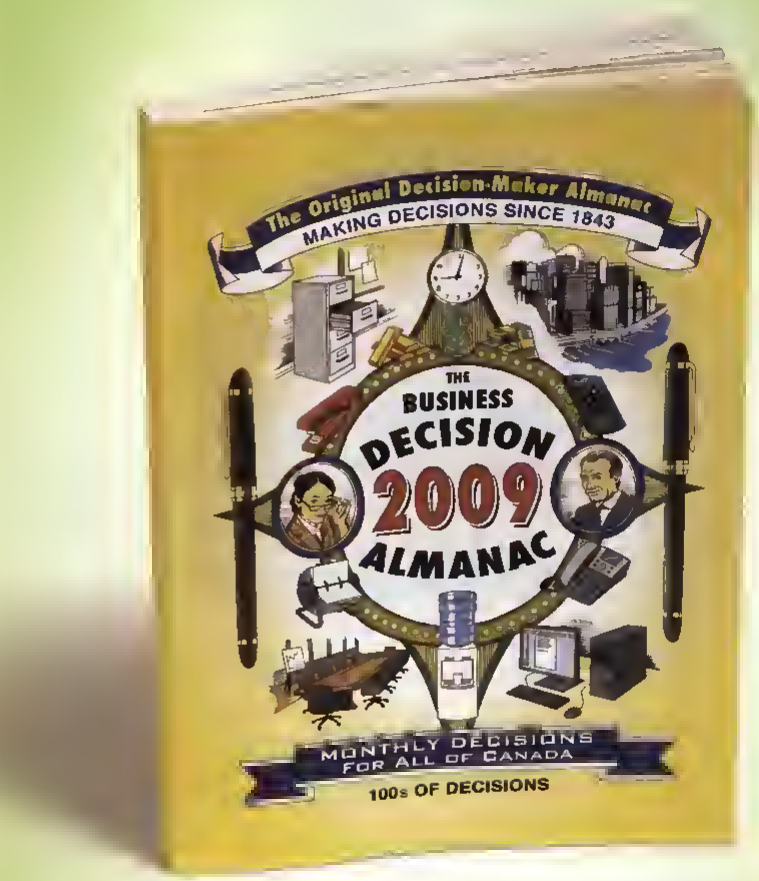
Yet he's attracting experienced party organizers who must see a deeper potential. For starters, they know how he got the job as Chrétien's summer chauffeur. It was because he was the son of Roméo LeBlanc, whose political resumé reads like a guide to four decades of Liberal political prowess: press secretary to Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau, then a Trudeau cabinet minister, next a senator, and finally governor general, appointed by Chrétien. Dominic LeBlanc grew up absorbing family lore about Pearson, living among the Trudeaus, and later learning first-hand from Chrétien.

At a moment when Liberals are feeling adrift from their winning tradition, LeBlanc's attraction begins with his claim to being firmly moored to that past. The trickier part of the sales job, now being plotted by LeBlanc's team, is the way they hope to capitalize on that, while simultaneously positioning him as the candidate of youth and change. To pull off this best-of-both-worlds pitch, they'll need to persuade delegates to the party's May leadership convention in Vancouver to fully re-evaluate an MP they've known, if they know him at all, as likeable and hard-working. "We have a short time to establish him," admits Cyrus Reporter, the veteran Liberal organizer heading LeBlanc's campaign, "as a guy who has come up in the party but is not part of some old establishment."

LeBlanc was born in Ottawa on Dec. 14, 1967, the day Pearson announced his resignation. As his press secretary, Roméo LeBlanc organized the prime minister's news conference that morning, then headed to the hospital for his first child's birth. "Mr. Pearson said that evening to my mother and father, 'You've lost a leader but gained a son,'" Dominic LeBlanc says. He heard that story often. His father had played a key role in Pearson's Prime Minister's Office, penning, for example, Pearson's rebuke of Charles de Gaulle after the French president's "*Vive le Québec libre*" speech at Montreal City Hall.

Pearson's successor loomed even larger in

PHOTOGRAPH BY BLAIR GABLE



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PEARSON RESIGNED THE DAY LEBLANC WAS BORN. 'YOU'VE LOST A LEADER BUT GAINED A SON.'



LEBLANC in his father's arms when Roméo returned from a trip with prime minister Trudeau; Dominic with Sacha Trudeau at Mont Tremblant

Dominic's early life. Roméo LeBlanc stayed on to serve as Trudeau's press secretary after the "Trudeaumania" election triumph of 1968. Again, LeBlanc helped shape a prime minister's message at historic moments, including the 1970 October Crisis. He then moved back to his home province of New Brunswick to run for Parliament, winning a seat in the 1972 election that relegated Trudeau to minority. As an MP, LeBlanc bought a house in Ottawa's leafy, upscale Glebe neighbourhood, Dominic's home while he attended public elementary and high schools. His father rose to be a long-serving fisheries and oceans minister under Trudeau.

The LeBlancs and Trudeaus saw a lot of each other away from Parliament Hill. By the time Dominic's parents separated in 1980, his mother, Joslyn LeBlanc, and Margaret Trudeau had grown close. During his high-school years, Dominic lived with his father, but often spent weekends, along with Margaret and her three sons, at his mother's place at the Quebec ski resort town of Mount Tremblant. Alexandre Trudeau, always called Sacha, who is six years younger than LeBlanc, remains a close friend. "Sacha has been for me a source of immense support and encouragement," LeBlanc says.

Sacha Trudeau's work as a documentary filmmaker, shooting in hot spots like Darfur and Iraq (he's also a *Maclean's* contributing editor), fuels their conversation. "Frankly, I've learned a lot from him," LeBlanc says, "particularly about international affairs and Canada's role in the world." Justin Trudeau is also a friend. As a rookie Montreal MP, he's much better known in Liberal circles, but is expected to remain neutral in the leadership contest, and might even co-chair the Vancouver convention.

LeBlanc remembers Pierre Trudeau as "a giant," and yet far from an intimidating figure. "I have very, very fond memories of how attentive he was to kids," he says. "Anytime I saw him when I was a young boy he was very interested in what we were doing in school, he was interested in what sports we were playing. For someone who was thought of as not having great human emotion in many contexts, with children it was the opposite—he was very much interested."

Less than two months before Trudeau's death on Sept. 28, 2000, the ailing former prime minister joined his old friend Roméo LeBlanc at a small fishing lodge on New Brunswick's Miramichi River. Dominic and Sacha were there too, although LeBlanc is reluctant to talk much about that last visit. (Roméo LeBlanc, now 80, lives with full-time nursing care at his home in New Brunswick, his health having deteriorated in recent years.) About his impression of Pierre Trudeau from those final conversations with his father, Dominic LeBlanc says only, "That marked me in a profound way, seeing him in that context."

Still, he doesn't describe the urbane Trudeau as a direct influence on his political style. LeBlanc says his approach is shaped by small-town New Brunswick. He has circled back from his own Ottawa upbringing, surrounded by national figures, to reconnect with the roots of his father, the seventh child of an Acadian family, whose older sisters sent back earnings from their work as maids in rich Massachusetts houses to help their little brother go to university. "I didn't spend all my life there, but my current life is rooted in francophone rural New Brunswick," LeBlanc says. "I'm aware of the challenges that regions of the country have, that minorities have, and the importance of the Charter of Rights, of things like the principle of equalization being in the Constitution."

Stressing that regional sensibility is a key to LeBlanc's bid to draw a sharp contrast between himself and Rae or Ignatieff, both Toronto MPs. The federal Liberals have become heavily reliant on seats in Toronto, which accounts for 32 of the 77 MPs the party elected on Oct. 14, along with smaller clusters in Montreal and Vancouver. LeBlanc says that must change. Having won his rural seat four times in eight years, LeBlanc claims he knows how to begin restoring the Liberal brand in Quebec beyond the city of Montreal. And with his regional perspective, he vows to rebuild in the Tory West. "We will never win a majority again," he says, "if we write off 50 seats in francophone Quebec, 75 seats in between North Bay and Vancouver."

But the notion of LeBlanc as a sort of hinterland politician isn't a neat fit. Not only did he grow up, aside from summers in New Brunswick, in the heart of the capital, he went on to an elite education, cultivating a durable network of influential friends along the way. He earned his B.A. at the University of Toronto's Trinity College, where he met future Liberal operatives like John Duffy and Karl Littler, as well as Tories he's still on good terms with, including Trade Minister Tony Clement. After graduating from law school at the University of New Brunswick, he met his future wife, Jolène Richard, in a bar admissions course. They were married in 2003. Daughter of a former chief justice of New Brunswick's Court of Queen's Bench, she was recently appointed a judge herself. Her son from a previous marriage, Selby, 18, attends the University of British Columbia.

A law career was never really in the cards for LeBlanc, though. Soon after he became a lawyer in 1993, Chrétien told him he "could always write wills or go to court," but politics wouldn't wait. He travelled on Chrétien's campaign plane through the 1993 election that brought the Liberals back to power. It was a heady experience. LeBlanc remembers details from election night at the Auberge Grand-Mère in Shawinigan, Que., Chrétien's hometown, down to Chrétien's insistence that the RCMP officers who had been assigned to him through the campaign be let off duty to join in the party. "It was quite a bond on that plane," LeBlanc says. "That lasted a long time in my imagination."

After staying on to work as an aide in Chrétien's office until 1996, LeBlanc left to study for his master's degree at Harvard Law School. "I'd always had an interest in American constitutional law," he says. "And I thought about seeing the meeting place of ideas and backgrounds that Harvard represents." But Canadian politics was never far from his mind. By the spring of 1997, he was commuting between Cambridge, Mass., where he was finishing his Harvard degree, and Beauséjour, where he was fighting for the Liberal nomination. He won it, but lost in the election that followed to an NDP challenger.

Friends say his determination not to give up on New Brunswick after that setback made his political career. Shawn Graham, now the province's Liberal premier, had known LeBlanc since their paths crossed frequently in childhood. "What I saw in Dominic is that [the defeat] made him even more resilient and stronger. He recognized that he needed to reconnect with the riding on the ground level, and he went out and did that over the next four years, and he was successful the next time around."

His win in the 2000 election turned out to be only the first in a string of victories. But as LeBlanc was establishing local dominance, his party's fortunes were steadily declining. Liberals endured the acrimonious split between Chrétien and Paul Martin, and then watched another potentially divisive rivalry emerge between the Ignatieff and Rae camps, as they lost the 2006 leadership contest to Stephane Dion. (LeBlanc stayed neutral in that race, and co-chaired the Montreal convention where Dion came from behind to win.)

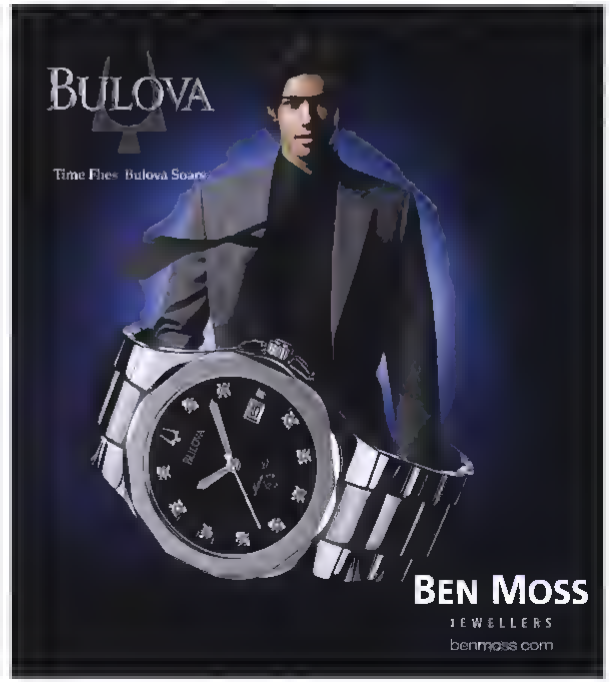
Now the clash between Ignatieff and Rae is shaping up as the main attraction in another leadership struggle, with Ignatieff the consensus front-runner. LeBlanc appears to be starting off far behind. His supporters, however, are hardly unknowns, and they've set their sights on overtaking Rae. Reporter is a veteran of Liberal election war rooms, and was Allan Rock's chief of staff when he held key cabinet posts under Chrétien. From the old Martin camp, LeBlanc has the support of prominent strategists Scott Reid and Tim Murphy, Sen. Percy Downe, a former chief of staff for Chrétien, is among his loyalists backing LeBlanc.

Luring Liberals with Ottawa insider credentials is essential for LeBlanc, but his backers suggest only six to 10 MPs are likely to line up behind him. That makes it crucial for him to make an early splash among players at the provincial level. Graham's support will



LEBLANC worked on Chrétien's 1993 campaign that brought the Liberals back to power

COURTESY OF DOMINIC LEBLANC





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be valuable in the Maritimes. On the opposite coast, Craig Munroe, president of the federal Liberals' B.C. wing, is an early LeBlanc convert. Even though he's a Vancouver lawyer, Munroe says he's drawn to LeBlanc for his potential to make the Liberals relevant in smaller cities, towns, and rural areas. "He can speak to Liberals in those ridings that aren't automatically winnable," he says.

Expanding the Liberal vote enough to win swaths of new seats won't happen in a single election, which is why LeBlanc's age also matters to Munroe and others. "He's the only one who has the capacity to make a 10- or even 15-year commitment to the party." But his relative youth, along with a tendency to joke around, also contributes to a nagging question: can LeBlanc add sufficient *gravitas* to his image? "He's a very funny guy who can keep you entertained," Munroe says. "But a serious issue comes up, and it's like a switch has been flicked."

LeBlanc showed a bit of that flare when he fielded questions recently in Ottawa from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' board of directors. Shortly before taking the podium, he noted the big screens set up in the hotel conference room, and deadpanned that he planned to "screen attack ads aimed at Bob and Michael." Describing his riding, he noted that its biggest town is Sackville, where Acadia University students swell the population from 5,000 to 7,000, but that's "never admitted because it would change the policing formula." (To municipal politicians, that's a one-liner. They crack up.) The questions, though, are dry and serious, but LeBlanc finds openings to lighten the tone. Asked about federal tax rules that discourage rental property upgrades, he started off, "I don't think it's an intentional policy attempt to increase the number of slum landlords...." And he's on top of the material, crediting Sen. Larry Campbell, the former Vancouver mayor, with having alerted him to the issue.

That sort of attention to practical matters could turn out to be LeBlanc's strong suit. Ask him to express a more sweeping vision, though, and his message can sound generic. "Canadians want a modern, centrist, pragmatic Liberal party," he says, adding: "I learned that from Mr. Chrétien. It was drilled into us."

There's more in his pointed reference about *where* he was schooled than his bland recitation of the course content. After all, Ignatieff and Rae talk about reclaiming the centre, too. If LeBlanc has an edge, it may be that he imbibed his centrist Liberalism straight from the party's main current. To pull off a major upset, he needs to first persuade Liberals that where he comes from matters, and then that he's ready—even if few of them had noticed before—to leap to the next level. **M**



OTTAWA MP: He has a knack for making friends and the instincts of a constituency politician

PHOTOGRAPH BY BLAIR GABLE

FOR THE RECORD

HOW HATE SPEECH IS LIKE A BAG OF POPCORN

"It's like microwaving popcorn. For the first while on the Internet, there was this little pop, pop, pop. And now, the popcorn is in full popping formation. It's popping here, popping there, and so it seems to make it difficult for measured voices to respond."
—Jennifer Lynch, chief commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, on why her organization should address hate speech, despite a recent study recommending it should step back.

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CHINA'S WILD WEST

Xinjiang is booming with development—while its Uighurs simmer with anger

BY ANNA MEHLER PAPERNY • China's Xinjiang region, in the deserts and mountains of the country's far northwest, could be two parallel universes. One is on the receiving end of a flood of foreign investment, home to swiftly multiplying oil derricks and gleaming office towers. This is the image the Chinese government wants to spring to mind when foreigners think of Xinjiang, the "wild west" whose economy Beijing is trying to bring level with the more prosperous areas of the country. The other, home to about eight million Uighurs, functions in a different language and boasts wholly foreign religion, culture and food. To a visitor it's like another country entirely. And that's what has Beijing worried.

In August, the region was rocked by violent attacks in the west that killed at least 33 people. The unrest, which the Chinese government has blamed on Uighur separatist groups, humiliated the government and shook China's ostensibly shatterproof national security leading up to the Beijing Olympics. In Xinjiang, the aftermath is still palpable. It's translated into heightened security measures—omnipresent guards and checkpoints, among other things—and tightened restrictions on religious practice for the Muslim Uighurs, one of China's 50-plus ethnic minorities that are separated from the Han majority by language and a deep-seated, mutual distrust.

"In their eyes, all Uighurs are terrorists," says Guli, a 22-year-old Uighur student attending university in the region's capital, Urumqi. Her name is a pseudonym—indeed, she doesn't even discuss such matters with her friends—because she's afraid of repercussions for her family and is convinced the government has spies looking out for separatist sentiment. "People are very afraid. If you say something, you will be in prison," she says. "People getting together, they will never talk politics. We don't know if the friend next to me is a spy."

That feeling is especially true in Guli's hometown of Yining, a far western Xinjiang city near the Kazakh border. There, in 1997, separatist riots killed dozens of people and wounded many more, resulting in a security crackdown and a city that's still visibly divided. On one side of the well-policed bus station is the older area that houses most of the city's Uighur population; on the other side is a more modern, glitzy area. This is where the influx of new—primarily Han—residents have come from what Guli calls "Inner China," taking advantage of the region's investment opportunities. "Ten years ago, you couldn't see one Chinese person in 10. Now you can't see one Uighur in 10 Chinese," she says.





BEIJING is involved in a mad rush for oil in Xinjiang, but Uighurs say they are not benefiting

THE PRE-OLYMPIC UNREST CAME FROM 'PEOPLE WHO CAN'T BEAR IT ANYMORE'

CAROLYN DRAKE/PANOS

REUTERS

In the meantime, he said, the Chinese government is going to great lengths to portray Xinjiang as a safe and stable place for tourism and foreign investment. "People would argue there's a trickle-down effect—lifestyles have improved, certainly literacy rates have improved," Gladney says. "Other people think the Uighurs have not benefited as much as the Han population. In the oil industry there are very, very few Uighurs. Economic indicators seem to indicate Uighur income is generally lower than the general population. Mortality rates are higher."

China's central government has been promoting development in the region. It has been transferring billions of yuan to Xinjiang annually, has launched numerous ambitious infrastructure projects, and is lessening restrictions on private business in the region. But attacks on buses and police convoys don't exactly inspire investor confidence. Bright red banners reading "For the stability of this area, we should grow our economy" hang in cities and villages next to posters cautioning residents to watch out for terrorist groups.

Part of Beijing's push for stability is a crackdown on religious devotion among the Uighurs. During the month-long observance of Ramadan, especially, Uighur officials were discouraged from public shows of religiosity. It isn't clear whether these measures are temporary, says Dru Gladney, an anthropology professor at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif., who has studied China's Uighurs. "I think a lot of people were hoping that after the Olympics it would be lessened. But so far it hasn't happened and people are kind of wondering if these are kind of permanent restrictions."

At 7 p.m. Beijing time—5 p.m. "Xinjiang time," the unofficial time zone locals use in a region thousands of kilometres west of the capital—workers clad in brightly coloured coveralls flood the streets of Shanshan, returning from the oil fields surrounding the desert city. It's just one example of the boom brought by the government's promotion of rapid expansion in oil and natural gas exploration and extraction in the region.

Liu Yong is the director of Dushanzi Petrochemical Co.'s office in Urumqi—a bustling metropolis with more skyscrapers than street side markets. He says the company, a branch of the state-owned China National Petroleum Co., is witnessing impressive growth, along with numerous other companies in the region. In the small Gobi Desert town of Dushanzi, about 225 km west of Urumqi, the company employs some 20,000 people. It's building new oil refineries and an ethylene plant, set to be completed in 2010, that will be the biggest in China. Liu envisions more development and infrastructure in the next few years as China strengthens trading ties with its Central Asian neighbours (the Xinjiang government's trade talks with Kazakhstan in mid-November concluded with vows to co-operate on cross-border trade, which topped US$7 billion in the first nine months of this year).

Liu rattles off the names of foreign countries whose citizens come to work in Urumqi. Foreign tourists throng to Xinjiang as well, he says, but not as many this year. He refers to "incidents" in Xinjiang around the Olympics that have made foreigners more wary about visiting. But he doesn't think those behind the attacks have much clout. And the prospect of the entire region separating is "impossible," he says. "Most of the Uighur people, for example in Urumqi, they're quiet." The problem is in the south of Xinjiang, he says, where poorer Uighurs have been misled by "wily" talk of independence from Uighur expatriates and their supporters abroad. "This is only a very small group," he says. "The economy is growing every year. The normal people, their life gets better."

Liu was born and raised in Xinjiang—his parents moved to the border city of Bole after 1949—and he says second-generation Han like him are as much at home there as the Uighur population. "Our generation is born here, our children are also born here. So we are Xinjiang people, now."

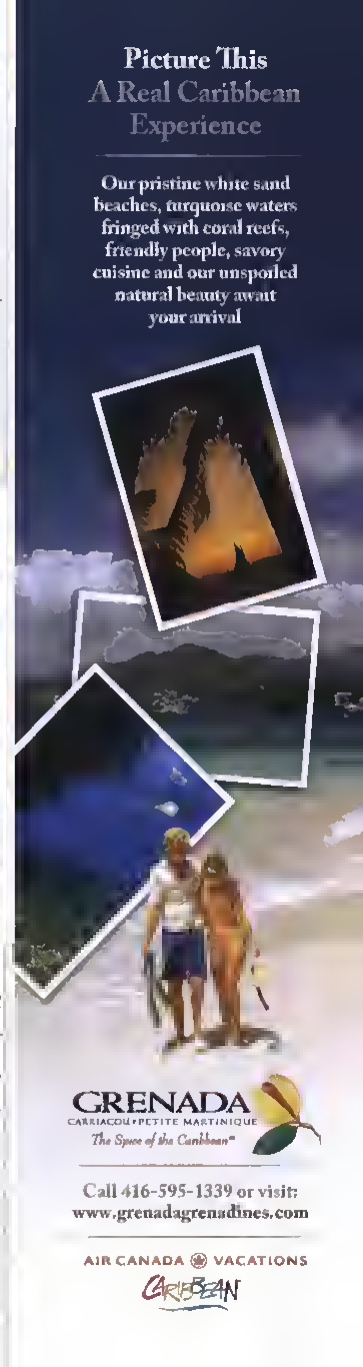
Hulking oil trucks vie for space with tiny three-wheeled taxis and motorcycles crammed with four-person families in Lianjin, careening between grapevines lining the southern Xinjiang village's narrow roads. One 50-year-old Uighur grape farmer, who asked to be called Abdurahman, has seen oil derricks spring up among grapevines as exploration goes on, literally, in his neighbours' backyards.

There are 20 oil pumps in his 5,000-household district, eight of those have been added in the past year. Through the government, oil companies are paying farmers tens of thousands of yuan for the use of their land—huge sums of money, if they can find another source of income. "People here are not satisfied with this, but we have no choice," he says. Official statistics show the income of people in the area is rising dramatically. But

THE ISSUE IN...

FRANCE: BARE NAKED 'MULLAHS' FIGHT BACK

Hardline nudists at Cap d'Agda, a naturist park, are under police investigation following a string of arson attacks on nightclubs frequented by *échangistes* or wife-swappers. The old-school nudists claim that the *échangistes* are taking over their recreation park and turning it into a sex playground and add that nudists should concentrate on "protecting nature." But others claim that the parks are being ruled by "mullahs of chaste nudity."





Abdurahman said this doesn't account for steep inflation for necessities such as fertilizer and wheat, which is outpacing the modestly rising price farmers command for their grapes, cotton or corn. "People living here, their living conditions are the same," he says. "Some even worse."

Most of all, Abdurahman is worried about the long-term consequences of this heady exploration for Lianjun's permanent residents. In addition to taking up valuable arable land, the bobbing derricks use up precious water resources in the desert landscape. Abdurahman's grape harvest was halved this year, a misfortune he blames in part on oil exploration and extraction, which he thinks is drying out the land. "In 10, 15, 20 years, if this continues, all the farmers will be forced to leave," he says. "Many people know if this continues, there must be some destruction in this area."

He has heard rumours that the government plans to move everyone elsewhere if the land becomes untenable for farming. "People talk about it, but nobody knows if it's true." Abdurahman says he would move if it meant he could continue to make a living, but mass displacement of the area's predominantly Uighur population could exacerbate tensions in the already volatile region. Although unilateral relocation of residents has become common in a country where development is paramount, it's coming up against increased resistance. In late November, more than 70 people were injured and 30 arrested following violent riots opposing a government resettlement plan in neighbouring Gansu province.

In Xinjiang, the government hopes the promise of economic development, combined with the threat of repercussions, will quell any vocal dissent. In October, Beijing released a list of eight alleged terrorists it is seeking in connection with the attacks in August, and it has called on other governments to help quell what it sees as a destabilizing separatist force in its frontier region. (In 2006, Uzbekistan handed over Huseyin Celil, a Chinese-Canadian Uighur later convicted of "separating China" and being a terrorist.)

Guli, for one, doesn't approve of the attacks in August—she doesn't think they accomplished anything—but she doesn't think those responsible are terrorists. Their actions are born out of desperation, she says. "That's not a terrorist attack. Because, you know, if everyone is checking all the time—when you go out he will check your bag, when you go in, he will check—when the government doesn't trust you anymore, you will not be happy. The pressure is not just a few months. It's many, many years. That's not organized by terrorists. That's the people who cannot bear it anymore, so they do things." M

GETTY

Hamelin to Pied Piper: come back

BY KATE LUNAU • In the year 1284, the legend goes, the German town of Hamelin was overrun with rats. Luckily for them, the Pied Piper was in town, and agreed to solve Hamelin's problem for a fee. Using his magical flute, he lured the rats into the Weser River, where they drowned. But after the townspeople refused to pay him, the Piper repeated the trick, leading their children into a cave—and they were never seen again. Since then, the legend of the Pied Piper, retold, most famously, by Robert Browning and the Brothers Grimm, has become Hamelin's claim to fame, and a major tourist attraction. Today, the Piper's likeness can be seen in fountains, stained glass windows, and other landmarks throughout the town. But there's one reminder of the beloved tale that most tourists and residents would probably rather *not* see: the rats themselves, which are infesting the town once again.

In Hamelin, which has a population of 60,000, rat packs up to 300-strong are now on the loose, local officials say. The infestation has been blamed on an abandoned vegetable patch, once used by locals but now strewn with rubbish, and a feeding ground for vermin. (Rat poison has been scattered through the area.) Although Hamelin's downtown is still relatively free of rats, pest control officers from all over Germany have been recruited to help—but no Pied Pipers, yet.

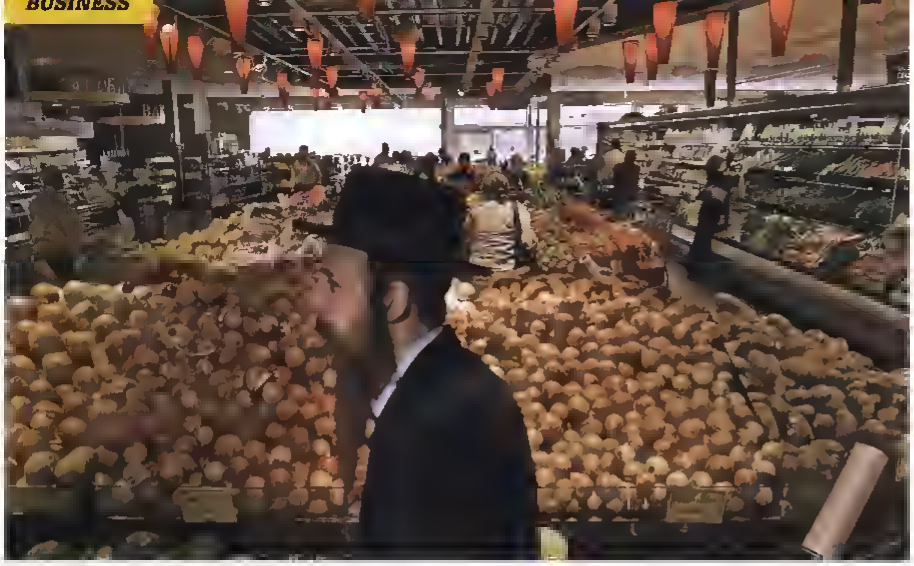


THIS TIME, the people of Hamelin hed better pey up

Town officials, meanwhile, are promising that Hamelin's rat plague will be under control within weeks. They must be crossing their fingers it won't repeat itself in 2009—next year marks the Pied Piper's 725th anniversary, and tourists are expected to descend upon Hamelin in droves (events include, somewhat morbidly, a children's parade).

After paying tribute to the Pied Piper for over seven centuries, the town has almost certainly made up for its shabby treatment of the Pied Piper—and learned a lesson, too. Hamelin's current rat catchers must feel encouraged that, given what happened last time, residents almost certainly won't neglect to pay them. M





INSIDE POMEGRANATE, the kosher industry's answer to Whole Foods, in Brooklyn

WHY FOOD SCARES JUST AREN'T KOSHER

Mainstream shoppers are turning to kosher for safer, purer options

BY LIANNE GEORGE • Rabbi Yaakov Horowitz, his yarmulke safely tucked under a gauzy hairnet, trundles through the halls of Manischewitz's mammoth New Jersey production facility. A round, affable man with a long, wiry beard and a white lab coat with the word "Rabbi" boldly embroidered on his chest, Horowitz is one of North America's foremost experts on the intricate art of kosher food production, and a key part of the continent's leading kosher brand, most famous for its matzo, sweet wines and traditional Jewish comfort foods.

Passing through the "wet room" where the matzo balls, gefilte fish, and borscht are jarred, and into the dry section, Horowitz surveys his pride and joy—a brand new $11-million, gymnasium sized matzo oven, the biggest in the world. "We're still taking the price tags off," he jokes, and rhymes off its specs the way one might with a new Porsche. If she ran non stop, around the clock, she could produce enough matzo in a year to circle the globe—twice.

For many in Canada's Jewish community, Manischewitz means home, family and tradition. For some, it signifies their last link to their heritage in an increasingly secular world. In TV ads, Manischewitz is billed as "the miracle you can taste"—like Betty Crocker, if she were doing God's work. The company will turn 120 years old this year, but today Horowitz is describing a brand new era for Manischewitz. In addition to its new equipment, the privately held company has a new 210,000-sq. foot, state-of-the art headquarters in Newark, N.J., and is preparing to extend its dominance in one of the fastest-growing segments of the North American food industry with its ever expanding product line: gourmet salsas, wasabi horseradish, and ready-to-serve cake frostings.

Perhaps the biggest change, at least symbolically, is the new man in charge. Bruce Bossidy, the company's first non-Jewish president and CEO. Even a decade ago, the thought of a non-Jew in charge at Manischewitz would have been unthinkable. But the company's staggering growth of late has little to do with faith or culture, and everything to do with broader trends in packaged foods.

The kosher food market is in the midst of an unprecedented boom. The business is worth $575 million in this country, according to a USDA Foreign Agricultural Services study, and growing annually by almost 20 per cent. In the U.S., kosher food pulls in over $10 billion. In 2007, Chicago-based food consultancy Mintel's Global New Products Database reported that "kosher" was the most frequently used claim on new products launched in the U.S. and Canada, more popular than "all natural," "organic," "low fat" and even "no additives or preservatives." Most consumers aren't even aware that roughly 65 per cent of all products on supermarket shelves are now certified kosher. That bottle of Perrier you're drinking? Kosher. Heinz ketchup? Kosher. President's Choice taco shells? Those, too.

Loblaws now operates 12 stores in Ontario with designated kosher sections, offering meats, baked goods, pantry and deli items, and full-time dairy supervision. Last month, Brooklyn, N.Y., became home to the first Pomegranate Market—the kosher industry's answer to Whole Foods—a 20,000-sq.-foot building that takes up an entire city block and features gourmet kosher meats and cheeses, an on-site bakery, and a kosher sushi counter. Even home appliance companies are getting in on the action. General Electric, Kenmore, and KitchenAid all recently introduced ovens with a built-in "Sabbath" mode, which allows observant Jews to use the appliance on holy days when cooking is prohibited.

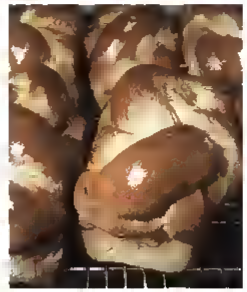
But what's driving the trend is not a massive return to religiosity among Jews in Canada. Here, Jewish consumers make up less than half of the kosher food market. Most of the growth, observers say, is taking place among those who have dietary concerns that are unrelated to cultural food restrictions, including vegetarians, and people with lactose intolerance or other food allergies, who trust kosher-certified "pareve" products, which contain no meat or dairy. Recent food scares—the listeria outbreak at Maple Leaf Foods, most notably—have only added to kosher's appeal. People are treading far more carefully in the grocery store aisles, and kosher's meticulous sourcing, close supervision and strict labelling practices set it apart.

There is a self-propelling aspect to the kosher trend: the bigger the market gets, the more companies want certification for their products. The more certified products lining supermarket shelves, the greater the number of people who are buying kosher (whether they know it or not). This translates into more companies eager to become kosher-certified and even more demand for kosher suppliers. For example, say Nabisco wants to make a kosher Oreo cookie (which it has), it makes business sense for manufacturers of Oreo ingredients—no matter where they are in the world—to certify their facilities in order to land that contract. "[They might not] know Jews, know kosher or have the foggiest desire to know kosher," says Horowitz, "but they want the Nabisco account because it's astronomical. That company will run to get kosher supervision."

A fourth-generation Hasidic rabbi, Horowitz—who is technically employed by the Orthodox Union (OU), the world's largest kosher supervisory organization in the world—has been with the Manischewitz Company since 1996. "In many companies the rabbi is like the USDA inspector," he says, "but in this particular company, the rabbi is really like senior management." Horowitz oversees a team of more than 15 rabbis and trained kosher supervisors, called Mashgiach. "This is the most intensive kosher supervisory production area in the world," he says.

The Kashruth Council of Canada (COR), this country's largest kosher certifier, based in Toronto, now has over 45,000 products under its supervision, and it's growing exponentially, says Rabbi Mordechai Levin, COR's executive director. "I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that it sends out a signal to the consumer, whether they're Jewish or not Jewish, that there's another inspection agency that is overlooking the processing of foods," he says. The cost of "kashering" a plant is estimated at $2,000 to $5,000 a year, depending on the types of ingredients involved. (Certain foods—such as meats, dairy products, wine and other grape by products—require special supervision.) It's generally considered minimal enough to justify the potential bump in sales that could result, Levin says.

As quickly as it's growing, though, there are still wild misconceptions about what kosher even means—the most common one being that rabbis stand over each food item and bless it. This would be false. "Of course a rabbi will give you a blessing any time because most rabbis are friendly," says Horowitz. The word kosher actually means "fit" or "proper." Collectively, kosher refers to ancient scriptural laws that outline which foods are fit to eat, how they should be combined and prepared, and what equipment should be used. Among the major restrictions: no animals that don't have split hooves or don't chew cud (so, no pig or rabbit); no fish without fins and scales (shrimp and other shellfish); no birds of prey, and no insects and their by products. Milk and meat must be kept separated, as must meat and fish. During Passover, an important holiday commemorating the exodus of Hebrew slaves from Egypt, regulations are extra stringent: observers are prohibited from eating leavened foods or specific grains, such as corn. "Passover is only eight days," says Horowitz, "but it's literally a billion dollar industry worldwide."





SOME 65 PER CENT OF PACKAGED FOOD IS KOSHER. HEINZ KETCHUP? KOSHER. PC TACO SHELLS? DITTO.



RABBI Horowitz (right) and Bossidy at the gefilte fish line, Pomegranate

Ultimately, Horowitz describes kosher as "a melding of ancient Biblical and rabbinic law to modern food technology." And because modern food technology is always changing, Horowitz is kept very busy pouring over the ancient texts that line his office walls, and discerning how to apply traditional laws to any new products or production changes at the plant.

All of these carefully adhered-to regulations contribute to the perception of kosher as safe and pure. Of course, where "healthy" is concerned, Horowitz says, "our definitions of not kosher, or not healthy, may not jive with what contemporary food science would say." In fact, the all natural health food craze created a massive headache for the kosher community when it first emerged in the '70s. Take for example, resinous glaze, an ingredient used in the production of all natural candy. It's a natural substance, but because it's an insect by product, it's not kosher. On the other hand, things people might generally consider to be unhealthy are not necessarily problematic from a kosher standpoint. For example, he says, years back when petrochemicals were used to flavour products, this made kosher approval simple. "If it's an inorganic substance, it can't be non-kosher. If it's a chemical, it can't be non-kosher."

Manischewitz—likely the most efficient

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE SIMON

MACLEAN'S DEC 15 '08
29



Margaret Atwood is on the money.

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kosher brand in the world—remains at the heart of this food sector. Founded in 1888 by Rabbi Dov Bear Manischewitz in Cincinnati, it was the first to mass-produce matzos, using patented machinery. "Matzo is the most important Jewish food," says Horowitz, a signal part of any Jewish Seder. "Once upon a time matzos were all made by hand," Horowitz says. "Dov Bear Manischewitz did for matzos what Henry Ford did for the automobile." In the 1940s, the company licensed its brand name to a New York based wine company. (Manischewitz wine is now produced by Canandaigua, the second largest producer in the U.S. after E. & J. Gallo.)

The company stayed in the hands of the Manischewitz family for over 100 years. At the time of its sale to Kohlberg & Company in 1990, Manischewitz had $1.5 billion in annual sales, exported products around world, and dominated the matzo market, according to the *New York Times*. (In fact, that same year, the company was accused of conspiring to fix the price of Passover matzos, and was later fined $1 million by a New Jersey federal court.) In 1998, Manischewitz was purchased by the R.A.B. Foods Group, which recently changed its name to the Manischewitz Company to exploit brand capital. In the last five years, it acquired kosher competitors, including Rokeach and Guiltless Gourmet.



MANISCHEWITZ, the big kosher brand, is exploring new turf

In January 2008, Bossidy, formerly the CEO of Dimensions, an arts and crafts company, took over the management of the company. He says it hasn't posed any problems, but he's clearly skittish when asked about it. "I've always been in consumer products," he says, "but I have to say I've never been involved in the kosher business before."

But his appointment is consistent with the company's focus on growth in the larger secular marketplace. The market of "cultural Jews" (those who want to preserve a feeling of grandma's house) is shrinking, says Horowitz. Meanwhile, the markets for "traditional Jews" (those who eat only kosher) and non-Jews (those looking for healthy, safer options) are growing and overlapping. "The marketplace will be the final arbiter of what exists and what doesn't," says Horowitz.

Indeed, the marketplace has inspired the company to extend into more popular fare, and experiment with the same trends as the conventional food market: portability, portion packs, supplementing products with vitamins, omega-3 acids and probiotics. "We acquired a company called Cuisine Innovations that does frozen hors d'oeuvres and appetizers," says Ken Janso, the company's brand manager. "We also have a brand called Asian Harvest—an Asian line offering mostly vegetables, baby cut corn, chow mein noodles." They're also exploring the Mediterranean trend. Maybe a line of soups.

Of course, the research and development of kosher products is more challenging than that of conventional foods. "It's another additional layer of supervision," says Horowitz. "Not only do you have to find out the fat content and whether there are any potential contaminants, etcetera, which every R & D lab would do, you also have to ask, is this particular ingredient or process doable by kosher standards?"

This can pose some unusual complications. For instance, Coca-Cola's New York bottling plant decided it wanted to introduce a kosher-for-Passover version of Coke. "But Coke is based on secret formulas," says Horowitz, "so how do you make something that's secret kosher-supervised? They had to develop a really novel system where they would submit to the OU literally 5,000 ingredients that were all kosher and the OU approved them and let them use any one of those ingredients, so that way they could keep it secret."

The list of flavours and products that are not available in a kosher form gets smaller every year—even flavours that might be considered repugnant to some traditionalists. Synthetic shrimp products, for instance. One U.S. company called J&D's sells kosher bacon salt, a zero calorie, vegetarian seasoning "that makes everything taste like bacon." But synthetic pork products is where Manischewitz draws the line. "That is something the Jewish kosher market would recoil at," says Horowitz. "They want to try out all kinds of new things. But if you had a bacon-flavoured matzo, it would not play in Peoria. Maybe in Peoria, but not in Brooklyn." M

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE SIMON

Are sports recession-proof? Nope.

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • When the pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson pulled out as a major sponsor of the Olympic Games last month, it sent organizers a loud warning shot: no matter how big and prestigious the Olympics may be, they're not immune from a global recession. The organizers of the Vancouver 2010 Games need to raise $760 million in sponsorships, but with other major sponsors like Nortel and GM Canada struggling, hitting that number is starting to look like a Herculean task.

Major sporting attractions and professional sports were once thought to be insulated from economic downturns. Historically, they've pulled through minor recessions unscathed, says Bruno Delorme, a sports marketing professor at Concordia University. But the current crisis is deeper, he says, and there are signs they're no longer immune.

GM, which has been staring down bankruptcy, has just abruptly ended its nine-year endorsement deal with golfer Tiger Woods. It has also pulled sponsorships from two NASCAR racetracks and the Masters golf tournament. It even announced that it won't run a single commercial during the biggest, most sponsorship-heavy sporting event in America: the Super Bowl.

With big corporations turning off the taps, whole leagues are feeling the pain. The LPGA has said it will have to drop two or three tournaments and as much as $5 million in prize money due to the downturn. The NBA is cutting almost 10 per cent of its work force and closing its Los Angeles office.



GM ABRUPTLY cut off a nine-year deal with Tiger Woods

Delorme says this isn't surprising. "Basketball, football and baseball are very much sponsorship driven and they'll really feel it," he says. "The NHL will feel it a bit less, though, because it's very much a gate-driven sport."

And what of the ridiculous salaries sports stars currently enjoy? Delorme says many of those agreements were struck before the economic collapse, so it's too early to tell. "But a lot of contracts expire at the end of the season," he says. "And I suspect you'll see a drop-off in the dollars being offered then." M

GETTY, CP

Acres of cars and nobody wants them

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • It's a sight depressing enough to convince even the most optimistic economist that we're plunging into a global recession. Row upon row of thousands of cars, worth millions of dollars, just sitting there, unwanted. They're reportedly piling up at the Port of Long Beach in California, where major carmakers have been forced to lease acres of extra space to store them.

It's not just cars that are piling up. Growing inventories of supersized flat screen TVs are forcing retailers to slash prices, according to analysts. Meanwhile, in China, there is more than a year's supply of appliances sitting in warehouses destined for nowhere. That few people are buying new products for their houses isn't surprising—after all, in the U.S., the inventory of unwanted houses is building up too.

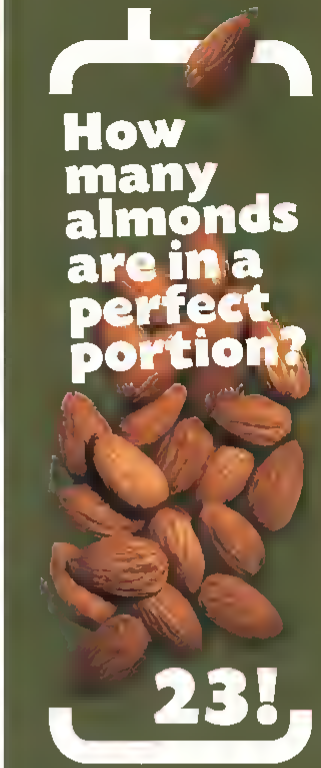


CARMAKERS had to lease extra land for the growing stockpile

Across the continent, all kinds of goods are being stockpiled as orders shrink, says a report from the Institute for Supply Management. "It appears that manufacturing is experiencing significant demand destruction as a result of recent events," wrote the ISM's Norbert Ore. That's bad news for the fate of the economy. "Inventories are pretty much the best way to predict a recession," says Daniel Trefler, a professor of competitiveness at the University of Toronto. A buildup in inventories typically marks the beginning of an economic downturn, he says. "It's a very strong signal."

This pattern has some concerned about the more ominous threat of deflation—a period of declining prices and income levels. That will be "the next major macroeconomic theme," David Rosenberg, chief North American economist at Merrill Lynch, wrote in a report to clients. But in the short term, the glut of increasingly cheap, unwanted goods isn't necessarily all bad. For shoppers, it could mean a little extra money in your pockets. Enjoy it while you can. M

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WILL SOY MAKE MY SON GAY?

People are panicking about what's been dubbed a 'superfood'

BY JULIA MCKINNELL • A three-inch long green bean is polarizing health food advocates and terrorizing North American consumers. The soybean, used in making tofu, soy sauce and soy milk, was once viewed as a "superfood," says soy expert Dr. Mark Messina. Now the protein-rich legume is provoking raging debates. Does it boost brain power or cause dementia? Does it fight cancer or shrink penises? Should boys drink it or will it turn them gay?

A vegan cookbook author on B.C.'s Denman Island is so fed up assuaging fears she's using her website to post people's panic-filled questions along with links to scientific papers. Bryanna Clark Grogan makes her own soy milk at home. "I'm getting the same questions over and over again," she says, questions like, "I read that soy kills sperm. Can soy affect menstruation? Is it true tofu gives you Alzheimer's?" Last week, she says, a girl asked, "I really want to use soy but how do you handle the hair loss thing?" Grogan is 60. Her hair reaches down her back. She sent the girl a photo of herself. "There are so many crazy stories going around," she says. "I've gone to the health food store and had one of the owners come up and ask me if it was all right to give soy to her son because she was worrying about his penis getting too small."

Canadian biochemist Richard Béliveau holds the Chair in Prevention and Treatment of Cancer at the Université du Québec. "You're probably touching on the most complicated subject in relation to food and cancer, which is soy," he says. Scientists got interested in soy after it was noticed that breast cancer in Asia is low compared to North America. "Among the things identified in the lifestyle of Japanese and Chinese women is that they eat soy on a regular basis," says Béliveau. "In soy, you have a class of molecules called phytoestrogens that are very similar to estrogens, the female sex hormone." Béliveau believes "phytoestrogens are able to prevent estrogens from interacting with breast cells."



SOY-EATING Asian woman have fewer rates of breast cancer

Menopause guru Dr. Christiane Northrup tells thousands of women to eat soy. "Soy may be helpful for conditions associated with hot flashes, vaginal dryness, night sweats, and mood swings." Still, "every day I receive letters from individuals who have heard that soy is dangerous."

Online searches frustrate Grogan. "Every time I search soy, it's negative." SoyOnlineService, for instance, states: "Myth: Soy estrogens are good for you. Truth: At dietary levels, they can prevent ovulation and stimulate the growth of cancer cells." In an article titled "Soy is making kids 'gay,'" Jim Rutz writes, "I have nothing against an occasional soy snack. Unfortunately, when you eat or drink a lot of soy, you're getting substantial quantities of estrogens. Soy is feminizing, and frequently leads to a decrease in the size of the penis, sexual confusion and homosexuality."

In July, the BBC reported a Harvard study found "a regular diet of even modest amounts of food containing soy may halve sperm concentrations." Soy advocate Mark Messina lambastes the findings: "It was an absolute terrible study. It shouldn't have been published." The study involved 99 men from fertility clinics. "Most of the reduction of sperm concentration was because ejaculate volume increased. If anything, that's a cool finding. But I don't think soy increases ejaculate volume, and there have been four clinical studies where you feed soy and look at sperm and you don't see anything. But the Harvard study got 900,000 hits! There's just so much misinformation about soy," laments Messina, from his home in Washington state. "It's just a mess." He blames a group called the Western A. Price Foundation, "whose main claim to fame is bashing soy." To Messina, their most aggravating assertion is that Asians don't eat much soy.

"Overall consumption of soy in Asia is surprisingly low," explains the foundation's website. "It is not a staple like rice, fish or pork. Soy is a condiment. No one would call mustard a staple in the American diet even though it is a very typical foodstuff."

Yoshi Yoshihara moved to Canada from Japan and adamantly refutes the condiment claim. "No, no, no! It's a main source of protein. Because my family didn't eat meat, we relied on tofu. The tofu vendor came every other day on his bike. We bought several cakes of tofu a week," he says. "I've heard about the anti-soy campaign. To me, it's a very strange phenomenon, like the Flat Earth Society."

"It's very funny," says Béliveau. "We eat junk food, we're facing the biggest obesity problem in the history of mankind, and we question that soy could lead to a health problem. We're very racist when it comes to food. Soy has been consumed for thousands of years by billions of people. If there was a health issue, we'd see it. It's impossible." M

TONICS

TAKE BROCCOLI WITH YOU ON A SMOKE BREAK

Researchers have learned that smokers can reduce the risk of lung cancer up to 55 per cent by eating more cruciferous vegetables. If you're heuling on some Matinées, consider loading your plate with raw broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. "Broccoli is not a therapeutic drug, but for smokers who believe they cannot quit nor do anything about their risk, this is something positive," says Li Tang of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

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CP PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CHOLEWA

LARRY HAGMAN 'Everybody has someone in their profession or family like this dude'

tv

Why we still care who shot J.R.

'Dallas,' at 30, is now a classic, all because of a villain who never stops being interesting BY JAIME J. WEINMAN

"The entire event was HORRIBLY orchestrated with many, many, many failed promises," wrote a commenter at the official message board for *Dallas*, the hit prime-time soap opera that celebrated its 30th anniversary with a cast reunion gathering on Nov 8. Another commenter raged against the promoters who organized the event, noting that he and his wife had paid $5,000 to travel from Australia to Texas, only to get no food, no drinks, and no opportunity to meet the cast. A promised fireworks show didn't happen until almost everyone had gone home. The original *Dallas* got 14 years' worth of storylines out of the attempts of evil oil baron J.R. Ewing (Larry Hagman) to screw over his goody-two-shoes brother Bobby (Patrick Duffy) and sozzled wife, Sue Ellen (Linda Gray), and so it's only fitting that the reunion—a barbecue at Southfork Ranch, an estate on the outskirts of the real Dallas—also involved broken promises and threats of revenge. That's the kind of melodrama that makes a show hold up. Most hour-long drama shows have their day and are then forgotten, a victim of changing tastes and styles, even recent hits like *NYPD Blue* have bombed on DVD and reruns, and most older dramas are forgotten by all except their hard-core fans. But *Dallas* is as much a part of popular culture now as it was in the late '70s and early '80s.

In its time, *Dallas* was a huge hit, one of the last broadcast TV shows that appealed to every age group and demographic. (An editor for *People* magazine once said that he knew the audience had fragmented when, for the first time, a *Dallas* cover didn't bring in a wide range of readers.) But it wasn't seen as any kind of future classic. And yet, a classic, with the continued cultural resonance that that word implies, is exactly what it's become. Larry Hagman's J.R., a man who called his wife a slut, had her committed to a sanatorium and tried to steal her child away from its real father—all in the course of a few episodes—is still one of the best-known characters in pop culture. Everybody knows about the third-season cliffhanger in which J.R. got shot by an unseen assailant. The storyline of season nine, where the writers killed off Bobby and then brought him back to life by making the whole season a dream, has become as infamous as *Happy Days*' Jumping the Shark; it was parodied on *Family Guy*, where *Dallas* stars Victoria Principal and Patrick Duffy reprised their roles.

The show doesn't just live on in the memories of people who grew up with it; the episodes are still being widely viewed all over the world. The U.S. channel ABC Soapnet has made *Dallas* reruns a centrepiece of its lineup. It's so popular overseas the BBC sent a camera crew to cover the reunion gathering. And DVDs of the series have done so well for Warner Brothers that the company has already released 10 of its 14 seasons, while similar shows like *Knots Landing* (a spinoff of *Dallas* that was almost as popular as the parent show) haven't performed nearly as well. *Dallas*, especially in its later seasons, has all the things we expect of '80s soapfests: actresses in heavy makeup, shoulder pads, miscarriages, frequent kidnappings. But so did *Dynasty* (a hugely popular *Dallas* clone masterminded by Aaron Spelling), and it's hard to imagine thousands of fans paying big money to attend a *Dynasty* reunion. *Dallas*'s fame isn't matched by any of the soaps that followed or preceded it; no one except Mia Farrow's fan club is clamouring to see the first prime-time soap opera, *Peyton Place*. So what have the Ewings got that all those other trashy families haven't?

It helps that the show has become a cultural symbol for Texas—even though it wasn't really about Texas, any more than *Cheers* was about Massachusetts. All but the first few episodes were shot on the MGM backlot in Hollywood (with the real Southfork ranch used only for exterior shots). David Jacobs, the creator of the series, even told the *New York Times* in 1980 that he wasn't familiar with Dallas or any other part of Texas when he wrote the script. "I was writing for the image and not really about the place." *Dallas* has a lot less to do with the actual Texas than it does with '50s movies about passionate rich Texans, like *Giant* and *Written on the Wind*. But compared to *Dynasty*, which took place in the smaller state of Colorado, or *Knots Landing*, which shares its California setting with dozens of other shows, *Dallas* gets a popularity boost simply by the fact that it's been unofficially adopted by the largest state in the U.S., the show is so associated with the popular image of Texas that *King of the Hill*, a more recent show set in that state, did an early episode in which a visitor kept calling the lead character "J.R."

But the main reason *Dallas* endures is that in J.R. it has what any TV show needs to survive past its own time: a character who never stops being interesting. Every prime-time soap has tried to have a larger-than-life villain to match Hagman, and the ones that start out without a villain are usually forced to add one. *Melrose Place* (soon to be revived on the CW network) wouldn't have survived if it hadn't added Heather Locklear's Amanda, sometimes described as J.R. in a low-cut dress. But those characters are mostly campy, cartoonish monsters, following in the footsteps of the queen of camp, Joan Collins on *Dynasty*. Not J.R., he's a plausible kind of monster whose brand of evil is integrated into polite society and corporate America. The other characters can't bring themselves to hate him outright because he's part of the family and they have to live with him. By having a villain who was a member in good standing of the good guys' family, *Dallas* was able to come up with more interesting stories; it was more fun to watch J.R. plot against his own brother, cousin and sister-in-law than a bunch of strangers. But it also made J.R. a surprisingly realistic bad guy. His parents (Jim Davis and Barbara Bel Geddes) knew what he was but loved him, just as real-life villains are loved by their parents and respected in their community. "Everybody has someone in their profession or family like this dude,"

Hegman explained back in 1980.

That's the other part of what makes *Dallas* hold up surprisingly well, despite the absurd '80s hairstyles and the fact that the Ewings are millionaires who have only one phone line in their house. Most prime-time soaps are campy, but *Dallas* was not, at least in its prime. It was melodrama, a traditional form with all the traditional melodramatic themes like revenge, greed and passion. The show got crazier and less plausible as its run went on, by the time it ended, the writers were so desperate for stories that the series finale was a takeoff of *It's a Wonderful Life* with J.R.'s guardian angel showing him that the world would have been much better if he hadn't been born. But at its best, in its first five or six seasons, *Dallas* was melodramatic without being stupid, it emphasized simple, primal emotions, and appealed to our sense of moral ambiguity, our mix of shame and delight in rooting for a creep like J.R. It had such a solid story and character foundation that it's hard to parody; Warner Brothers recently cancelled plans to do a *Dallas* movie revamping the series as a campy comedy. Unlike *Charlie's Angels*, *Dallas* doesn't lend itself to that kind of mockery, it's not great art, but it's good television.

And it's been influential in ways that more acclaimed, more Emmy-showered shows can't possibly match. The style of *Dallas*, with its emphasis on angry threats, overheated melodrama and corporate chicanery, is making a comeback on TV today. *Desperate Housewives* and *Dirty Sexy Money* are homages to the *Dallas* format, with just a bit of postmodern irony added to the standard soapy hijinks. FX's Emmy-winning *Damages*, starring Glenn Close, is a high-class soap that does for lawyers what *Dallas* once did for oil executives.

The success of *Dallas* also changed the nature of prime-time TV storytelling, and even shows that aren't soap operas have learned something from it. Before *Dallas*, prime-time dramas made every episode self-contained, with no continuity between them (unless it was a two part episode). But while *Dallas* started out telling self-contained stories, they gradually started to change during its second season: the writers discovered that it was more effective to spread storylines across months and even years, instead of wrapping up every story in an hour. And suddenly the old way of TV storytelling wasn't enough, as audiences noticed how much more involving TV shows could be if the characters remembered what happened last week. The "Who Shot J.R.?" storyline was more than a marketing and publicity triumph, it demonstrated how a show could build a story,



The DVDs have done so well 10 of the 14 seasons are already out





THE BIG REUNION (top) cast members Mary Crosby, Patrick Duffy, Larry Hegman, Linda Grey, Steve Kanaly, and fans (below)

week by week, to the point that everyone in the world would become emotionally involved with it. Dramas like *Lost* and *24*, in which the viewer is rewarded for sticking with the characters all season, may have *Dallas* to thank for making them possible.

That's not much comfort to the people who turned up in the real Texas on Nov. 8, only to find that their VIP tickets (costing up to $1,000) weren't honoured and that the live band never showed up. But that's also a tribute to *Dallas*'s staying power; only a classic show, or at least a very important one, could get fans to endure a poorly organized reunion without turning them against the show. As one fan wrote on the official discussion board: "I have no intention of letting this ruin my love of *Dallas*, my thoughts on the ranch and staff, or the cast." These fans didn't get to eat or drink, didn't get their photo ops, and many of them had travelled long distances for no good reason. But they've learned that sometimes in life, you get a raw deal. They learned it the same place that people are learning that lesson today: on *Dallas*. M



ACCORDING TO TV... BARACK OBAMA

"I've lived through 17 presidents and the difference I've noted is that Democrats bomb other countries reluctantly, instead of flet-out enjoying it. But he's good with the slogans. 'Change you can believe in.' Well, you can believe in unicorns too, but that doesn't meke them reel. And he's got everyone chenting, 'Yes we can!' when they should be chanting, 'Yes, you'd better.'"—Mrs. Enid (Cathy Jones) on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*

WILLI SCHNEIDER/CP; ROBERT HUGHES/NEWSCOM

GETTY; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CHOLEWA



MORTIMER ADLER: An ecedemic who didn't 'suffer subtlety gledly,' he thought Western culture hed precisely 102 Greet Idees

Great Shams of the Western World

How two academics and an ad man crafted a series of unreadable but profitable classics

BY BRIAN BETHUNE • The Great Books of the Western World were ostentatiously launched on April 15, 1952, at a glittering black-tie affair in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. On a raised dais of honour sat the 54 volumes, a joint publishing venture of the University of Chicago and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 443 works by 74 writers ranging from Homer to Freud. The audience was equally star studded, featuring a large swath of old American money (Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, and the like), prominent critics, and the British consul general, there to pick up a set for his young Queen, only two months on the throne. From a half-century's perspective, the moment stands out as a high point in high culture, when academic and social elites could confidently identify the building blocks of the Western mind. And be heard: a million sets, each costing several hundred dollars, were sold over the next decade.

It was also a hollow triumph, even on its own terms, as *Boston Globe* columnist Alex Beam makes clear in *A Great Idea At The Time* (Public Affairs), his hilarious dissection of the Great Books phenomenon. The set's three godfathers—self-absorbed academics Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler, and William Benton, an adman turned publisher—had brought such a mix of motives and stubborn eccentricity to the project that for all their professed love of books, the end result was a collection of virtual anti-books.

The Great Books are, as Beam justifiably calls them, "icons of unreadability." There are classics that ordinary readers have loved for centuries, from *The Iliad* to *Don Quixote*, made forbidding by cheap translations printed in double columns of tiny, eye glazing text. There is no expert commentary, always a help with such familiar material as Thomas Aquinas's inquiry into "Whether we should distinguish Irascible and Concupiscible Parts in the Superior Appetite." Worse even than commentary-free medieval theology are the scientific texts. Johannes Kepler's *Harmonies of the Worlds*, which ponders "which planet sings soprano, which alto," is a landmark text in the history of astronomy, but is no longer readable. No wonder that when Beam bought his set on eBay, the seller enthused: "I doubt these have ever been opened."

There are two backstories to this pretty pass. One of them is noble: the English-speaking world has a long history of self-education that arose from Bible-study-inspired mass literacy. Carnegie libraries and workingmen's clubs where Plato and Locke were studied were part of that tradition, and Benton sensed a market for a must-read series of classics. Hutchins, an old pal from Yale, was complaining, along with Adler, about what would now be called the "dumbing down" of higher education. An unholy alliance was born.

Sometimes commerce and pedagogy were perfectly aligned. Adler, according to a colleague, "did not suffer subtlety gladly", he was adamant that Everyman, his ideal reader, needed no guiding hand to come to grips with the West's intellectual titans. Benton, looking to cut costs, was happy to concur. All three agreed too that they needed a gimmick. Benton thought an "ideas index," something to let readers cheat, so to speak, would be just the thing. Adler, who wanted to demonstrate how the classics "speak" to one another, agreed. His grandly named "Syntopicon" would proclaim Western culture had precisely 102 Great Ideas, ranging from Angel to World.

To prepare the index, Adler hired grad students to comb the sacred 443 texts for references. Indexer Saul Bellow, sitting on a park bench reading Shakespeare for $2 an hour, thought it a "whopper of a job." But Benton, the adman, was appalled at what Adler seemed to think could be sold. "Angel?" he blurted out when he saw the list, "Where's Adultery?" Even Hutchins complained: "Most of my friends are interested in money, fame, power and sex—where are *they*?" he asked.

But once it all came to press, and Benton unleashed his encyclopedia salesmen, the money rolled in. In a society where the phrase "middle-brow" had just been coined, his sales pitches played on middle-class aspirations and insecurities. "The ability to Discuss and Clarify Basic Ideas is vital to success," ran one national ad. "Doors open to the man who possesses this talent." Benton was soon selling 35,000 sets a year, peaking at 50,000 in 1961. And then, almost overnight, nothing. The 1960s had arrived, and the voice of authority wasn't as authoritative anymore. The Great Books' time had come and gone, even as the great books still endure. M



FINALLY, A BOOK ABOUT... WHAT THE FÜHRER READ

Timothy Ryback tries e new teck in portraying the Nazi dictator by taking Hitler's reading es emeens to reeding Hitler. *Hitler's Private Library* (Knopf) surveys 1,200 books, now in the U.S. Library of Congress from the Führer's own collection. Meny ere on occult matters, showing en interest in 'demonic' forces ecting upon the "men of genius." And there's e complete set of Karl Mey's pulp tales of Old West derring-do that Hitler particularly loved.



KINGS OF KELOWNA: This gigantic garage comes with stainless steel breakfast bar, black leather stools and three flat-screen TVs

How to make other men jealous

A new generation is taking the tradition of the garage hideaway to a whole new level

BY MICHAEL FRISCOLANTI • Gordon Lindsay runs a construction company that specializes in oil refineries and water treatment plants. Earlier this year, when the 49-year-old went searching for a new head office, he had only two conditions: location (his hometown of Kelowna, B.C.) and view (spectacular). "I wanted something with beautiful scenery, but all the commercial space that was left had nothing," he says. "And then one day I was in my garage, I looked out the back window, and I thought 'Holy s--t. There's the perfect view!' "

Today, Lindsay's two-car garage is the revamped envy of all men. His new wooden desk, L-shaped, overlooks that Okanagan vista, and the custom-made filing cabinets are painted the same shade of bright red as his beloved Porsche Carrera—which, of course, is now part of the "office" decor. His one-of-a-kind headquarters also sports a fireplace and a big-screen television. "It's cozy and it's quiet," says Lindsay, the father of four. "It's my own little hideaway."

For husbands everywhere, the garage has always been a reliable hiding spot, a female-free zone they can call their own. But a new generation of garage-dwelling men is taking the tradition to a whole new—and expensive—level. They don't want grandpa's pegboard, and they certainly don't want his grease stains. What they truly crave is an indoor/outdoor living room, a place where the beer is cold, the game is on, and the neighbours are eternally welcome—and a bit jealous.

"The garage is now the guys' playroom, and the only room they're allowed to decorate," says Curt Dorin, owner of Unlimited Garage, the B.C. company that designed Lindsay's dream space. "Most of the customers I deal with are married guys, and their wives don't really care what they do in the garage."

So they do it all. Pool tables. Couches. Walk-in humidors. Fully equipped kitchens. One Alberta man redesigned his garage to look like a fishing lodge. Others are trading their lawn chairs for La-Z-Boys and their toolboxes for plasmas. Some have even banished the car altogether. "The garage interior is the next great room, and it's one of the fastest-growing areas in the huge home improvement industry," says Don Fetherstonhaugh, who operates The Garage Store, a Calgary company that installs specialized floors, shelves and any other personalized touch the customer wants. "The gals have lots of rooms, and it's time for the guy, who is 50 per cent of the equation, to have his little refuge."

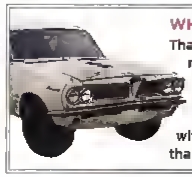
Or big refuge. Back in Kelowna, Fetherstonhaugh's company recently supplied some of the high-end goodies for a mammoth, 17-car garage in the exclusive Woodland Hills district. Designed around a single, metallic blue refrigerator, the gigantic garage comes complete with track lighting, stainless steel breakfast bar, black leather stools and three flat-screen televisions. Yes, three. The finishing touch? A urinal in the adjacent bathroom. "We joke about that garage a lot," says developer Geby Wager. "Most people who see it say 'If I were in the doghouse I could just stay here forever and the wife could stay inside.' "

Such shrines don't come cheap. Lindsay's office with a view cost him $20,000 in labour and supplies, and, depending on the details of the design, the price tag can quickly soar into six figures. But this trend is not just the exclusive domain of the rich and famous. In fact, some of the most authentic layouts are completely homemade—and recession-proof. An old recliner, a cable hookup, and voila.

Take Pasquale Posteraro. He built his stand-alone garage in 1992, but it's been at least 10 years since a car has seen the inside (unless you count the framed Lamborghinis and Ferraris that cover the walls). Now furnished with patio chairs instead of tire marks, his favourite room is also everyone else's. Friends and neighbours in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., constantly stroll up the driveway for a cognac or a cigar or to watch the six o'clock news. The garage is even bug-free, thanks to a large black screen that covers the main door. "It's all about the fresh air," he says. "When you're stuck in the basement, what are you going to look at? The walls?"

Posteraro adores his garage so much that he's thinking of building an addition on the back end that could double as his home office. His company, Pasquale's Imports, sells the best espresso machines in the city, and countless satisfied customers have tasted their first cup while standing in his garage.

"All I need is a bed and I'm set," he laughs. "I'd never leave." M



WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT ... A LEMANS TEMPEST

The car was a bit of a wreck, missing its interior, motor and transmission. So when the owner put the 1963 Pontiac LeMans Tempest Supar Duty on eBay, the US$500 reserve price might have seemed high. But not to aficionados, who recognized its rarity: its Plexiglas windows, unusual suspension and a dash plate with the LeMans name. One of only six models ever produced, the drag car avantually sold for a whopping US$226,521

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF BASSETT



PRESIDENTIAL PRIZEFIGHT: Sheen (left) and Langella sparring as Frost and Nixon in the original stage play that inspired the movie

Still the interview of the century

'Frost/Nixon' wrings suspense from a political event that captivated the world

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON • Long before Jon Stewart outsmarted real news with fake news, or before Sarah Palin scrambled to compete with Tina Fey on *Saturday Night Live*, David Frost pioneered faux current affairs with *That Was the Week That Was*. This satirical BBC series spawned numerous clones and variations around the world—including the CBC's controversial *This Hour has Seven Days* and its distant descendant, *This Hour has 22 Minutes*. Both Frost's show and *Seven Days* were cancelled by public broadcasters that found their cocktail of news and satire too potent. Now news and entertainment are so openly incestuous that, like Palin and Fey, it's hard to tell them apart. Stewart interrupts comedy to conduct a serious interview with Barack Obama. David Letterman humiliates John McCain for snubbing him. And CNN's arcade-like election coverage looks like a game show from Mars.

Entertainment now drives television news, but that wasn't the case in the 1970s, when Frost landed a series of interviews with Richard Nixon—the first audience granted by the disgraced former president since his resignation during the Watergate scandal. Frost's career was flagging at the time. In the United States he was primarily known as the playboy host of a celebrity talk show that had been cancelled after three seasons. And serious journalists scoffed at the notion of a lightweight entertainer conducting the "interview of the century." Everyone was so confident that Nixon would stonewall this Brit showboat, the U.S. networks weren't even interested in bidding on its broadcast—until Frost cornered Nixon in the final round and extracted a historic confession.

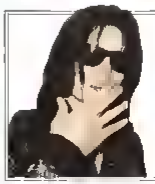
Drawing more than 45 million viewers, the Frost/Nixon faceoff became the most watched current affairs program in television history. And now it has been re-engineered into entertainment, along with the backstage shenanigans that surrounded the event. Directed by Ron Howard—and adapted by British screenwriter Peter Morgan (*The Queen*) from his own hit play—*Frost/Nixon* is a drama of epic hubris. The showdown between its protagonists has all the makings of a classic prizefight—a clash between two underdogs, both blinded by vanity and fighting to redeem their mangled reputations. And that's how Howard has staged it, as a kind of political sports movie that amounts to an irresistible hybrid—*Rocky* meets *All the President's Men*.

For a critic, it's almost a professional embarrassment to praise a Ron Howard movie. This, after all, is a director who, on Judgement Day, will have to atone for *The Da Vinci Code*, *Cinderella Man* and *Far and Away*. But when strapped to the saddle of a true story, as he was with *Apollo 13*, Howard has shown he can wring suspense from an event even when the audience knows the outcome. With *Frost/Nixon*, he has remained faithful to the play. He insisted the actors who created the roles onstage—Michael Sheen and Frank Langella—star in the film version. And he has recruited a strong cast to play their *real-politik* advisers, including Kevin Bacon as Nixon handler Lt.-Col. Jack Brennan and Sam Rockwell as author James Reston Jr.

But the movie is essentially a chamber piece pivoting on two beautifully nuanced performances. Without resorting to impersonation, Langella captures Nixon's sly intelligence and iconic mannerisms, but also digs beneath the image to convey a tortured soul. And as Frost, Sheen oozes with the same unctuous gloss that he applied to his portrayal of Tony Blair in *The Queen*. Even though Frost is the protagonist, scrambling to find a chink in Nixon's rhetorical armour, the showbiz gadfly seems just as morally suspect as his prey. His is the typical conundrum of the celebrity interviewer. Showing off for a girl he picked up on the plane (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*'s Rebecca Hall), when he first meets the former president his instinct is to suck up to the man he is supposed to demolish. And in the interviews, Nixon talks circles around him—until the final discussion of Watergate.

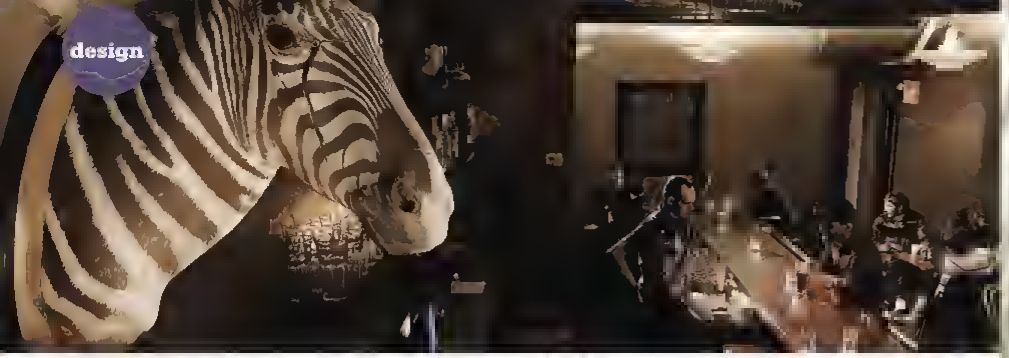
Then the drama comes down to the real-time suspense of the close-up, and the camera's power to reveal emotion and elicit confession. Langella, who won a Tony for the role onstage, repatriates that moment to its original medium with a tour de force that should finally get him the Oscar nod he deserved for last year's *Starting Out in the Evening*. And when Ron Howard, like Frost, leaves his showbiz cocoon to deliver a jolt of real substance, you know there's a whole lotta redemption going on. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS/CP



WE'RE STALKING ... MICHAEL JACKSON

Is there anything the former pop superstar hasn't done? Last week it was reported he'd converted to Islam, changing his name to "Mikaaal." Jackson, 50, is said to have undergone a *shahada* ceremony in a Los Angeles home wearing a small hat. It was a more modest choice of garments after he walked around Bahrain in 2006, wearing a veil, head scarf and abaya, often seen on Muslim women.



THE DISPLAY animals at the Ossington bar in Toronto are changed periodically; at one point a three-foot alligator hung from the ceiling

Raise a glass to taxidermy chic

The coolest bars are now decorated to resemble 19th-century men's hunting rooms

BY ALEXANDRA SHIMO • The Ossington, a trendy bar for Toronto hipsters and artists, is named after the English Viscount Ossington, a 19th-century speaker of the British House of Commons. Viscount Ossington had a reputation as an adventurer, having grown up at a time when people still hunted with French bayonets and the killing of large animals was considered a gentlemanly sport. It was an aesthetic the owners of the Ossington wanted to emulate, which explains, on the north wall, the head of a zebra, its long neck taut and muscular, and the stuffed rooster resting on a wooden shelf above the bar. The display animals are changed periodically; at one point a three foot alligator hung from the ceiling.

Decorating a bar to resemble a 19th-century men's hunting room might seem anachronistic, tasteless even, yet it is the *de rigueur* of cool, according to Robert Lanham, author of the *Hipster Handbook*. For a cosmopolitan, young clientele, the trophies poke fun at displays of machismo and Hemingway-like megalomania, says Kevin Berger, features editor at *Salon* magazine. While the real thing is "garish," the ironic tribute is humorous, he says. But satire isn't the only reason for the popularity of the dead animals, Lanham says. These bars are frequented by a crowd accustomed to being criticized by conservative commentators as rich pretty boys who are out of touch with the working class hunting heartland. Co-opting these trophy animals is a way of "out-blue-collaring" their critics, he says.

Taxidermy fits in with the other macho, rugged trappings of the great outdoors that are currently in vogue—lumberjack shirts, Cormac McCarthy novels, shaggy beards and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer. Pabst, the brew that truckers first made popular, has now become the ale of choice for the hip twentysomething crowd, says Nicolas Robinson, a co-owner of Montreal's Bar Korova, a college hangout decorated with "rustic animal trophies" like stuffed deer and caribou. Bar Korova is known for its wide selection of bourbon and 1980s video game tabletops, evidence that the bar and its clientele are all part of the ironic, post-modern, mash-up style.

Taxidermy chic is also a feature of Bily Kun, a Montreal restaurant adorned with the heads of ostriches, which look down on people as they dine. At Pullman, a nearby wine bar, a pair of deer legs and hooves project from a lamp sculpture, made by designer Bruno Braën, who also decorated the Bily Kun. The Seattle pub Smith has dead pheasants, elk and quail. The aesthetic there feels like "a hunting lodge for rich weirdos," according to the local press (who were quoting the cult film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*).

In New York, the trend is common enough that one resident, Sam Chontz, joked that "the quality of drinks served is directly proportional to the number of moose heads above the bar." The best-known example is probably the restaurant Freemans, where jars of dried insects are displayed besides the bottles of booze, and the decor includes a pair of dead pheasants, several other species of birds, a ram's head and a toothy black boar. Another Manhattan bar, Please Don't Tell, displays a black bear's head, stuffed cobra, otter and owl, among other creatures. Most are perched menacingly above the tables. They are arranged so they look like they "are about to bite people," says Christine Sismondo, author of *Mondo Cocktail: A Shaken and Stirred History*.

Perhaps the most extreme example of the trend is designer Alexander McQueen's flotilla of dead creatures at this year's Paris Fashion Week. The collection of stuffed animals included a tiger, an elephant, a zebra, several birds and a polar bear lined up along the catwalk. It looked like a "taxidermist's theme park," according to the fashion publication *Women's Wear Daily*. In the program notes, McQueen said he wanted the show to raise awareness of the damage man has inflicted on the planet. Several commentators, including one from *Women's Wear Daily*, said the controversial stunt was the highlight of the week.

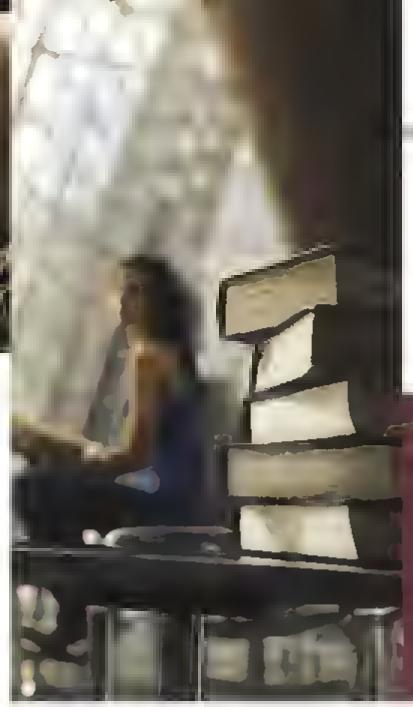
Taxidermy pays homage to a period we think of as both dangerous and cool, says Sismondo. In a culture dominated by virtual experiences (the Internet, video games, television, etc.), it represents a more physical, rugged existence, Lanham says. In urban bars and on fashion catwalks, it is a symbol of nature and authenticity, a nostalgic reminder of a way of life we have lost. M



BAD TASTE | DEXTER'S DINING ROOM

Fans of the crime show *Dexter* will wish they could chow down in "Dexter's Dining Room," an all-white formal dining room fitted with dramatic red blood spatters on the white walls, on the tablecloth, even across the plates and inside racks of forensic-science test tubes. Created by designer Amy Lau inside a New York City townhouse, exhibit elements are also available for sale, including bloody chairs and "dismembered" flatware with missing parts

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEE TOWNDROW



Continuing Education

In the current economic climate, continuing education is an imperative. Not only will the stimulation help to keep your mind active, but the new skills and credentials you acquire will make your resume shine in a competitive job market. Engagement as a life-long learner demonstrates a creative responsiveness to change, helping you to identify new opportunities and add value wherever you go.

The Barriers Come Down:
Distance Education is the Way for Many

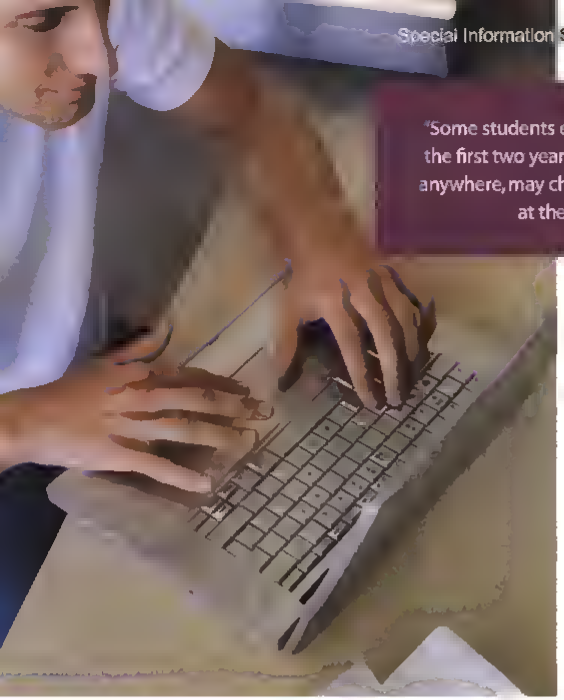
Tamie Perryment did most of the work for her Bachelor of Arts degree between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. from the comfort of her home sofa. The Edmonton-based woman's four children were aged 4 to 10 when she began her degree, and she also worked part-time as a teaching assistant.

The demands of family, work and school may sound exhausting, but Perryment loved it! "I'm an over-achiever who gets bored easily. School was stimulating and gave me something to work on that was just for me," she comments. Perryment graduated from Edmonton's Athabasca University with her BA in 1993 and in 2000 started a master's program in conflict analysis and management at Victoria-based Royal Roads University (RRU). The course work was mostly done online, with one month per year of in-class learning.

A big fan of online distance learning, Perryment says the experience was in no way isolating. The online discussions were mature, thoughtful and reflective, and the coaching (or teaching) was to a high standard, she says. "Overall, I found it a very positive way to learn."

Athabasca is part of a consortium of Canadian universities that have banded together under the rubric Canadian Virtual University (CVU). They offer a wide range of online and distance education degrees, diplomas and certificates in both French and English. With 12 participating universities from every region in Canada, students can choose from over 2,500 courses and 350 programs. Credits are awarded by the university that offers the course.

CVU's executive director, Vicky Busch, says the consortium offers many benefits to students, including the ability to mix and match courses for



"Some students even begin their degree online, and since the first two years of a program are generally transferable anywhere, may choose to complete the degree on campus at the university of their choosing."

degree completion and one-stop access to a much wider array of courses than they would find at any single member school. "Some students even begin their degree online, and since the first two years of a program are generally transferable anywhere, may choose to complete the degree on campus at the university of their choosing."

Over 120,000 students took courses from CVU partner universities last year and there is consistent growth in both graduate and undergraduate enrolment and programs offered. New programs include a Doctor of Business Administration from Athabasca and a Bachelor of Arts in Police Studies from Memorial University in Newfoundland. Niche programs include a Certificate in Crime Prevention from Cape Breton University. Nursing programs are very popular, especially a Bachelor of Nursing degree for graduates of practical nursing programs, as is social work.

Maureen MacDonald is dean of continuing studies at the University of Victoria (not a CVU participant), which is active in online and distance learning, with over 2,000 registrations a year in its continuing studies distance education programs.

"The job market continues to change and upgrading skills may help people remain more employable or adapt to the changing market. For example, distance education courses, certificates and diplomas are perfect for people with arts or science degrees who find themselves working in the business world. They may want to know more about business administration or technology but don't necessarily want or need a full degree in business. A certificate program, with job-related skills, can really enhance their value to their employer or enable them to move around within the job market."

Lyn Jakimchuk is a University of Victoria continuing education student. After completing a teaching degree and working as an elementary school teacher for four years, Jakimchuk realized that she wanted to explore other options. "I love learning and teaching but I wasn't in the right place for me. I didn't want to jump into a masters program and I was looking for an educational upgrade that would qualify me to teach in the adult learning sector."

The Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education was a perfect fit for Jakimchuk. "I like it because it is so flexible. I can take courses in the classroom or online and I have up to five years to complete it. I can continue working and meet my family responsibilities. The courses and workshops have enhanced my skills and abilities as an instructor in a deep and meaningful way, and I also enjoy the face-to-face and online networking with other students from across Canada and from many walks of life."

A different take on online learning will soon be available at Toronto's Seneca College. Seneca's Managed E-Lab offers a campus-based place for students engaged in government-sponsored re-training programs, such as Second Career, to work on online courses even though they may not have a computer, Internet access or a quiet place to study.

"The lab will be open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and while students will have to physically attend, it gives them a lot of flexibility in terms of when they do so," says Susan Savoie, dean, Faculty of Continuing Education and Training. "We can support up to 10 students at any given time and staff will be available to help them get familiar with the technology. It's a great way to begin a second career and we have a lot of diploma and certificate programs available for them to choose from."

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A Little Guidance can go a Long Way

The continuing education field offers a myriad of options for those who want to gain accreditation, hone their skills, develop or even change careers. With a sometimes overwhelming range of options from which to choose, what factors should you consider and what help is to clarify

As president of Vancouver based career transition service CareerPlan, Melita Thornhill knows first-hand the challenges associated with career transition She went back to school after a successful career in marketing and the field of career counselling to become a chaplain Then, after working in palliative care for several years, she also returned to the career counselling sector

"Going back to school after many years can raise very real fears about our ability to learn," she notes "And it can be shocking to discover how obsolete our skills and language have become when we re-enter a profession after several years' absence I hired a coach to help bring me up to speed and also received mentoring from an experienced colleague "

When asked about some of the common mistakes people make when choosing a continuing education path, she points to the devastating effect of taking courses for which you don't have an aptitude or for which there is no demand in the labour market

"When people are successful in their courses it boosts their confidence and makes a huge contribution to their emotional health And sometimes even very successful people need that boost when embarking on a different career path or phase in life."



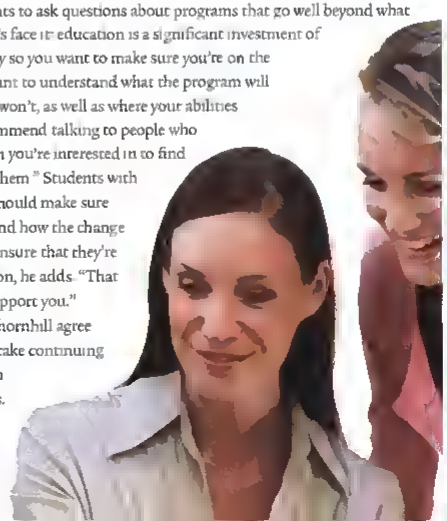
Thornhill says it's time to consider using a career counselling service when, "You find yourself waking up on Monday and wishing it was Friday " She points out that as we mature there's more of a sense of wanting to do work that accords with our personal priorities. "Making or marketing one more widget just doesn't cut it anymore."

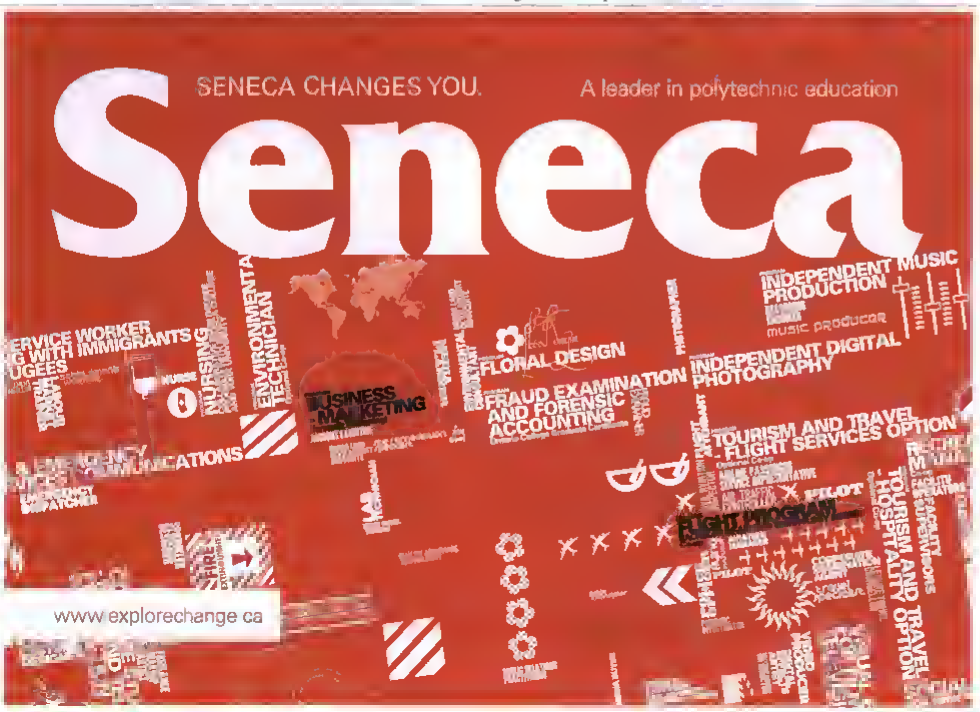
Alan Kearns, author of Get the Right Job Right Now!, calls himself "Canada's career coach " His company CareerJoy has coaches in several Canadian cities who help clients take control of their careers. "People have so much choice that they often don't know what to do We help people with their research and give them tools to help them make better choices "

> "When people are successful in their courses it boosts their confidence and makes a huge contribution to their emotional health."

Kearns advises clients to ask questions about programs that go well beyond what the brochures say "Let's face it- education is a significant investment of time, energy and money so you want to make sure you're on the right track It's important to understand what the program will do for you and what it won't, as well as where your abilities and interests lie I recommend talking to people who have taken the program you're interested in to find out how it has helped them " Students with spouses and children should make sure their families understand how the change will impact them and ensure that they're on-side with the decision, he adds. "That way, they're likely to support you."

Both Kearns and Thornhill agree that it is important to take continuing education courses from recognized institutions. "Formal institutions like colleges and







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- Native Species and Natural Processes
- Public Relations
- Restoration of Natural Systems

University of Victoria
Continuing Studies

universities have credible brands, as do designations from recognized associations in professions like accounting and project management," says Kearns. "If an employer doesn't recognize your credentials you won't get the full value from your investment," adds Thornhill.

Canada's universities and community colleges all have counsellors who can help students determine specific courses or programs that will meet their educational and career goals. Some offer broader counselling services for those who are undecided or confused about what to take, and to what end Toronto's Humber College, for example, has a unique service called Career Advancement, which offers skill and interest assessments using career software programs, combined with one-on-one sessions with career coaches.

"It's all about helping to identify new career directions," says Manager, Career Centre and Career Advancement Service, Karen Fast. "Some of our clients are mothers returning to the workforce, and others feel they have plateaued in their careers and want a new direction."

The Career Advancement program is free for any registered continuing education student at Humber and is available to the general public for $125.

Check out career counselling services in your community. Both private and school-based programs can help set you on the right track.

A New Career is Just around the Corner

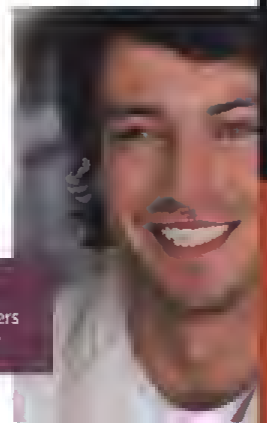
If you've fallen into a rut at work, don't despair. An exciting new career may be closer than you think

Short-term, full-time certificate programs such as the Web Design, Development and Maintenance Certificate program can get you job-ready in only 22 weeks. Or you can combine online and in-class learning to become eligible for licensing as a mortgage agent or broker. For someone wanting to start her own business, the Entrepreneurship Studies Certificate can also be completed while you work.

The Digital Imaging Training Centre at Humber College in Toronto offers a Web Design, Development and Maintenance Certificate program that requires previous experience or relevant education. "In order to ensure that applicants succeed, we review their portfolio and work/education experience as part of the application process," says Gary Lima, director of New Media and Continuing Education, School of Media Studies and Information Technology. The program is, by Lima's admission, intensive and students are exhausted by the end of the 22 weeks. But the rewards are also significant. "We don't have enough graduates to fill all the job offers that come to the program."

The Mortgage Broker Program is an exclusive Seneca College program which meets the educational requirements for licensing as a mortgage broker in Ontario, under the auspices of the regulator, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO). The program consists of two parts, as mandated by FSCO: Part I, which is entirely online, and Part II, which is five days in-class at Seneca College, Monday to Friday, and includes the three-hour licensing exam. This new program will be available for the first time in December 2008. It is based entirely on FSCO's Mortgage Broker Qualifying Standards (MBQS). Students in the program will learn to perform the skills required to supervise mortgage agents and to carry out the responsibilities of a principal broker. Susan Horne, chair, Faculty of Continuing Education and Training at Seneca College, adds, "The program will be accessible to all Ontarians who are interested in becoming mortgage brokers. As mandated by FSCO, the program will combine theory and practical applications to ensure that successful participants are able to meet the high professional standards of both the mortgage brokerage industry and the regulator."

The Business School at Humber College, in conjunction with the Canadian Institute of Entrepreneurship, offers the Entrepreneurship Studies Certificate. "While not every graduate will open her own business, entrepreneurial skills are valued by employers because entrepreneurs are innovative, responsive to change and have the ability to make things happen," says Wanda Buote, director of professional and continuing education. "One interesting course places students in a virtual world where they have to undertake all aspects of setting up a business, from selecting a location to writing the business plan and applying for a loan."



"We don't have enough graduates to fill all the job offers that come to the program."

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Hi! I'm Baby Jesus. Hope you enjoy my blog!



SCOTT FESCHUK

Baby Jesus: the Blog

User Profile: I am the Son of God, the Prince of Peace and the Messiah. I am also good with tools.

Likes: Carpentry, Fish, Hugs

Dislikes: Money-changers, Cruelty, Shaving

What I'm Doing Right Now: Various people are bringing me laud

12/25/0

4:33 a.m. Hi, I'm Baby Jesus. Welcome to my blog! It's a place where I can write down my feelings about stuff and junk, tell you about what's going down here in B-hem and keep you up to date on the redeeming of mankind. Enjoy!

4:54 So this is antiquity. Question: are there always this many cows around?

7:22 I don't know about these swaddling clothes. Swaddling is pretty 10 B.M. (Before Me) if you know what I'm saying. What do you think? Answer my online poll.

10:36 Just spent the last 90 minutes being adored. Next up: an hour, maybe two, of being beheld. Surprisingly fatiguing.

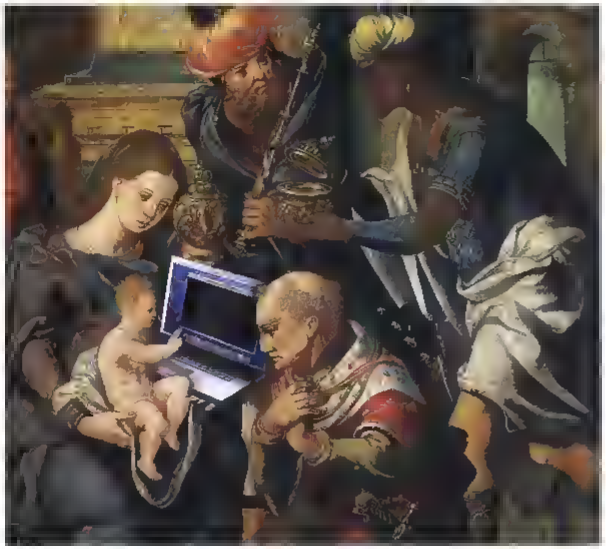
11:51 Man, this is awkward. There's this kid who's been playing his drum for me for, like, *ever*. Which is great and everything, and the ox and lamb seem to be enjoying themselves—but has no one in this town heard of a melody? Maybe if I smile at him he'll stop.

12:08 p.m. Pah-*rum-pum-pum-pum*. Oh great, now *that's* going to be in my head all day.

1:39 Let's take a question from the mailbag. Shepherd23987612 asks: "Baby Jesus, will sinners burn in the fires of Hell for all eternity or for a finite period that reflects the severity of their transgressions?" Good question, Shepherd239etc. (Spoiler alert!) Eternity. Remember: I don't make the rules, I just serve as a physical manifestation of the omnipotent deity who does.

2:12 While it is true there are no limits to my capacity for forgiveness, let's try to keep things civilized in the comments section, okay? It's getting out of hand. Kill everyone under the age of 2? That's real classy, KingHerodRocks.

3:03 Angels. They *are* beautiful. Truly one of God's most inspired creations. I just had no idea how much they shed. There are feathers *everywhere*.



A new batch of shepherds showed up. I'm liveblogging it. 3:22 Bowing. 3:23 Kneeling.

3:08 How's this sound: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto other others." Needs work, right? I'll give it a polish.

3:22 A new batch of shepherds just showed up. I'm going to liveblog it.

- 3:22:08 Bowing
- 3:23:44 Kneeling
- 3:25:16 I think I saw a full-on genuflect there.
- 3:26:11 And *again* with the bowing.

5:46 Frankincense *and* myrrh?? I guess it's true what they say—you really can't have too much aromatic resin.

6:18 Back to the mailbag. Shepherd 123954644 asks: "How would you feel if over the course of many centuries the joyful celebration of the miracle of your virgin birth was slowly but inexorably transformed into an increasingly secular event characterized by binge eating, an insatiable lust for consumer goods and blindly pagan reverence for a mythical, chronically obese, gift-giving hermit?"

Honest answer: I'd be a bit bummed. That said, what's with all the cynicism? Doesn't anyone have a question for me about the Good News I bring and the fact that I am both the light and the way?

8:44 I've had to turn off this blog's comments feature—some of the stuff was really getting personal. (Yes, I'm talking to you, JesusSucks.)

I'm sorry about the brightness of the star over my manger—but it's an essential part of the overall effect. It wouldn't be much of a "star of wonder" if shepherds had to stand around debating which one it was, would it? *Sorry you walked all the way to Sidon because you followed the wrong star, Wise Men, but Almighty God had to respect municipal bylaws relating to light pollution.* Jesus!

Oh, great, you've made me take me in vain. Thanks a lot.

Also, an important note: while yes, technically speaking, I am responsible for all these shepherds wandering into town, that does not mean I have to cover their bar tabs.

9:17 Just talked to the Holy Father. Asked if there's a different species I could be redeeming. He's going to get back to me after he predetermines the outcome of today's chariot race. M

ON THE WEB To read Feschuk on the famous visit, his blog: **macleans.ca/feschuk**

IT'S PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CHOLEWA





COMPASSION GIVES HOPE

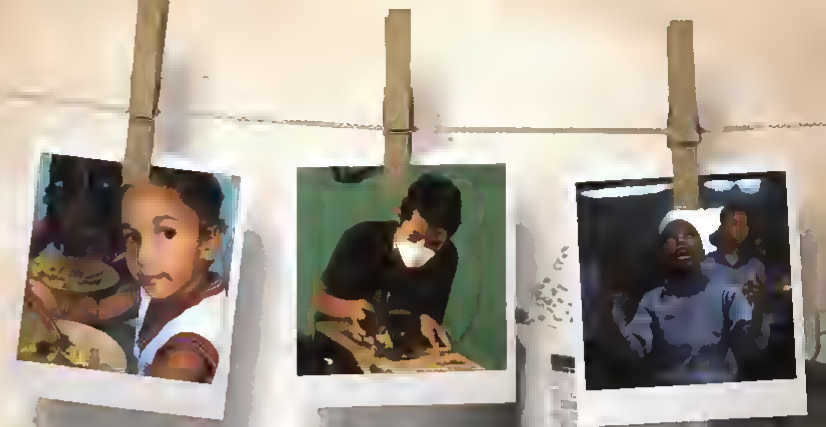


COMPASSION GIVES HOPE

Since 1952, Compassion has been a voice for those who most need one: Children. Compassion is committed to eliminating the root causes of poverty for children around the world. Our passion and purpose reside in our unwavering commitment to Jesus Christ and His command to serve the poor. And it's through this commitment that Compassion gives hope.

TO CHILDREN

Children are the most harshly affected by poverty and the least able to change their circumstances. That's why children are the focus of Compassion's ministry. Compassion ministers to more than one million children in 25 of the world's poorest nations. Children receive age-appropriate learning opportunities and vocational training, participate in group activities to develop crucial social skills, and receive access to proper health care and nutrition. Children benefit from a one-to-one relationship with a Christian sponsor, who encourages them as they grow to meet their God-given potential as future leaders in their communities.





THROUGH THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church is God's chosen instrument to transform a dying world. That's why we work exclusively with churches in developing nations to deliver practical care to children in need. As unfailing advocates for children in poverty, these churches provide much-needed continuity, stability and security to some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children. Trained and equipped by Compassion in child development, our partnership with the local church is essential to the success of our ministry.

WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

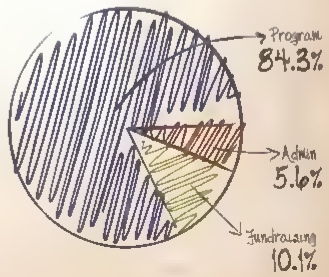
We believe that you best transform a community by transforming its people. Addressing the physical effects of poverty is not enough – A child's spiritual needs cannot be overlooked. The only way to address these is with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Belief that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to die for us that we may have salvation is central to our ministry.

Every child in our care hears the gospel in a culturally appropriate way and is given the opportunity to respond, without pressure or manipulation. We want every child to see the reality of Jesus lived through faith and action in the lives of each person at every child development centre around the world.

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We commit no less than 80% of all funds raised for use in ministry activities and no more than 20% for fundraising and administrative expenses. Compassion has been recognized as a charity of outstanding financial integrity by a number of independent accountability organizations. Financial audits are carried out annually internally and externally to ensure that children are receiving the maximum benefit of dollars generated.

Financial statements are available online at compassion.ca/financialprofile or by calling 1-800-563-5437.





GIVE HOPE

TO A CHILD IN NEED

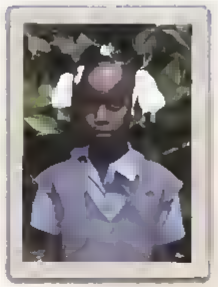
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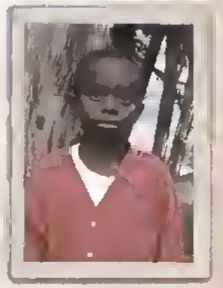
Dexter John Calapas
Birthdate: Sept. 6, 2004
Philippines
PH-672-0032



Yorleni Yesenia Castellanos Tróchez
Birthdate: March 4, 2005
Honduras
HO-116-0561



Valentine Clermont
Birthdate: Feb. 7, 2002
Haiti
HA-626-6551



Manikundabayo Joseph
Birthdate: June 18, 2003
Rwanda
RW-368-0007

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NEWSMAKERS 2008

SECTION BY KATE FILLION AND PATRICIA TREBLE
with Martin Patriquin, Luiza Ch. Savage, Ken MacQueen and Andrew Coyne



JIM YOUNG/REUTERS

Newsmaker of the year

Barack Obama

It was supposed to be the year of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Way back when, the New York senator had a double digit lead in the polls, the backing of a formidable political machine and a virtual lock on the Democratic nomination. Then came Jan. 3. The winner of the first electoral matchup—in Iowa, of all white bread states—was a young, mixed-race senator from Illinois by the name of Barack Obama, whose national political experience totalled less than four years.

The sight of cautious, corn fed midwesterners embracing a politician whose middle name is "Hussein" sent a tremor through the political establishment and ignited Obama's extraordinarily disciplined campaign. Yet pollsters and pundits were unsure he could go the distance—and were quite sure Americans weren't ready for a black president.

They proved otherwise in November, electing the 47 year old son of a black Kenyan father and a white Kansan mother to be the 44th president of the United States. Voters were moved by his call for change, vague and dreamy though it sometimes seemed, and impressed by his unflappable manner and sharp intellect. Even his personal story, so unorthodox for a presidential candidate—the searching boyhood in Indonesia and Hawaii, the hardscrabble community organizing, the lyrical best-selling memoir—took on an appealing sheen as the sitting President, so privileged and yet so ordinary, disappointed again and again.

None of which is to say that Obama's rise was uncomplicated. Early on, an unsettling question was he "black enough"? Too young to have marched for civil rights, too pragmatic to ally himself closely with polarizing figures such as Al Sharpton—could the first black president of the *Harvard Law Review* really appeal to average black voters? Yes he could, and did, earning 95 per cent of their vote on Election Day. He also won over educated whites, Latinos, and especially young voters; Obama carried 53 per cent of the total popular vote, even winning swing states such as Indiana, which last voted for a Democrat in 1964.

In retrospect, the bloody ground war for the Democratic nomination, which dragged on into June, turned out to be fortuitous. It gave Obama the time—and the push—he needed to polish his message of hope, build his war chest and amass armies of volunteers in states the Democrats had traditionally ceded to the GOP. And when Clinton criticized the inflammatory sermons of his pastor, Jeremiah Wright, Obama seized the early opportunity to deal with the controversy, delivering a riveting, high-minded speech on race relations. Then, after clinching the nomination, he made Clinton's trademark bread-and-butter economic message his own—just in time for the financial crisis.

A gifted campaigner, Obama was also shrewd and occasionally ruthless. In a cynical yet crucial move, he broke his pledge to rely on public funding for the general election. While the Republican nominee John McCain stuck with the post-convention spending limit of US$84 million, Obama spent more than twice that. Likewise, after declaring he could no more repudiate his controversial reverend than his own grandmother, he cut ties with the preacher who had baptized his children. Later, the candidate who ran on a message of bipartisanship gave way to a president elect whose first appointment was a sharp elbowed infighter, Rahm Emanuel, to be his chief of staff.

But although Obama is more pragmatic than his idealistic oratory might suggest, as the election drew near his rallies took on a near cultish feel, complete with starry eyed youngsters and the likes of Oprah Winfrey hanging on his every word. McCain—whose own lurching, toxic campaign provided a stark contrast—was emboldened to label him more "celebrity" than leader.

The label didn't stick. Somehow, even when manoeuvring politically, Obama managed to appear both steady and in control, ascetic even, with his diet of salmon, rice and broccoli. And there was much to admire about his campaign: the innovative use of technology, the record-shattering grassroots fundraising, the businesslike "No Drama Obama" ethic, the contagious excitement of being on the right side of history.

Late in the game, he told supporters a "righteous wind" was at their back. But in the end an economic tsunami—and a wildly unpopular Republican administration—propelled Obama to the White House. His occupancy will be as historic as the conditions he inherits: a devastated economy, a disastrous foreign policy, a nation diminished in the world's eyes. How he will manage is anyone's guess, but he has already lifted the country's spirits and sense of possibility, while rewriting history and ushering in a Democratic majority in Congress—not bad for a man who, just a year ago, was viewed as the longest of long shots. M



His highly disciplined campaign was bloody-minded, idealistic and strategic, like Obama himself



Entrances

Carla Bruni
After an oh-so-public romance with newly divorced French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the model/singer married him in February. Surprisingly, the new first lady has helped tone down his image as a flashy loudmouth, and on a state visit to Britain, she wowed crowds and drew comparisons to Jackie O.

Very clean-cut, single male singers having babies
Ricky Martin, 36, had twin boys via a surrogate. "I'm enjoying one of the most beautiful moments in my life," said the *Livin' La Vida Loca* singer. Next, Clay Aiken, 30, fathered a child with his long-time producer and finally came out of the closet, explaining, "I cannot raise a child to lie or to hide things."

Patrick Kane
The Chicago Blackhawk right winger with Gretzky-like playmaking instincts won the Calder trophy for a rookie season in which he scored 21 goals and 51 assists—not bad for a 19-year-old.

Extrasolar photos
Canadian astrophysicist Christian Marois took the first pictures ever of planets in another solar system circling a star. The planets make ours look dinky.

Tzipi Livni
Tzip-a-dee-doo-dah! The former Mossad agent fended off political opponents to become leader of Israel's Kadima party, after PM and scoundrel-in-chief Ehud Olmert resigned amidst corruption allegations. Her next challenge: win the election in 2009.

Democracy in Bhutan
In March, citizens dutifully shuffled off to the polls for the first time, obeying their king's command to embrace democracy—a bold regal move in a region known for violent regime change. Then again, this Himalayan nation takes its measure using something called "Gross National Happiness."

Pistol-packing at the office
In July, a new law allowing employees to bring guns to work came into effect in Florida. Of course, there are a few exceptions—no gun-toting if you toil in a nuclear plant or prison—but some employers still aren't happy. Disney, for instance, doesn't want firearms in the Magic Kingdom, and canned a security guard who invoked the law.

Lungless frog
A new amphibian was discovered in a stream in Borneo. *Barbourula kalimantanensis*, which breathes entirely through its skin because it lacks lungs. However, chemical pollution related to illegal mining in the area has scientists fearing for the frogs' future.

Black African billionaires
Last year, the only two billionaires in Africa were whites who inherited their wealth. Now they have two black companions: a Nigerian food magnate and a South African with a knack for rescuing ailing gold mines.

Feet on the beach
Severed human feet clad in running shoes keep washing up on B.C. beaches. The creepy mystery remains unsolved.

GETTY AP CP





Entrances

Campaigning by text
In August, Obama made history by announcing his choice for VP, Joe Biden, via text message. The Taliban, too, has adopted texting, which is now a preferred medium for issuing threats

Shenae Grimes
The 19-year-old Torontonian was plucked from the relative obscurity that is *Degrassi: The Next Generation* to be the lead on another TV remake: *90210*. Perhaps channelling Shannen Doherty, inches melted off her already-slim frame and reports surfaced of chain-smoking and diva-like behaviour.

The $2,500 car
India's Tata Motors unveiled the Nano, a mini-car short on comforts and price. Expected to revolutionize transport but hike pollution in the Third World, the car may hit the market in 2010.

Leona Aglukkaq
The 41-year-old politician, the daughter of a hunter, is the first Inuk federal cabinet minister, helming Health—her reward, if that particular file can be considered one, for winning the lusted-after Nunavut seat. The Tories poured in money and effort to ensure her victory

Independent Kosovo
The landlocked Serbian province declared its independence in February. When Western countries recognized Kosovo as a sovereign nation, Serbs responded by torching the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade. Christian Serbs and Muslim Kosovars don't get on.

BlackBerry Storm
RIM's new sleek touchscreen device aims to lure consumers swooning over the iPhone. Storm's gimmick: a more responsive keyboard

Retail therapy in Egypt
Ever since Hamas took over Gaza last year, the strip has been blockaded by Israel and ordinary citizens have gone without basic goods. But for 12 days in January, Gazans shopped, en masse, in Egypt, after knocking down huge chunks of the border fence. They brought back such items as laundry soap, toilet paper and goats before the border was resealed

Amal Soliman
The law graduate, 32, became the first woman in Egypt, and possibly the entire Muslim world, licensed to conduct weddings and sign marriage and divorce contracts. Jubilation was muted. "She'll always take the woman's side," one man grumbled

David Petraeus
The U.S. Army general was put in charge of Central Command,

Steve Yzerman, the new head of men's Olympic hockey, has just one goal: a gold medal in 2010

Doomsday vault
Wanting to safeguard the planet's biodiversity, Norway buried a vault deep in the permafrost in the northern mountains, where duplicate samples of millions of seeds from thousands of gene banks around the world will be stored. Now, if a country's collection is destroyed through disaster or warfare, Norway has a backup, and extinction is less likely

responsible for military operations in the Middle East and Central Asia. His mission: apply lessons learned in Iraq to Afghanistan. Read: get financially friendly with the locals and wheel in as many troops as possible. Just one slight problem unlike Iraq, where the Sunnis are into payoffs, the Afghans resist all occupying powers, even generous ones M

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Exits



FIDEL CASTRO
After nearly 50 years in the top job, Cuba's increasingly frail president was replaced by his somewhat younger (and more capitalism-friendly) brother Raul. Cubans can now purchase cellphones and computers, and the government has launched a campaign against homophobia. Next up: land reform.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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*Suncor's progress to the end of 2007 (compared to 1990 baseline)

To find out more about Suncor's decade of action on climate change, read the report at **www.suncor.com/climatechange**

SUNCOR ENERGY



RICK HILLIER
The outspoken defence staff chief, known for feuding with the Harper government over policy, left the battlefield



JUSTINE HENIN
The top ranked female player stunned the world of tennis when she announced her retirement at 25, after winning the French and U S Opens in 2007

Exits

Bill Gates stepped down after 33 years at Microsoft's helm to concentrate on his charitable foundation… Staffers at the **Canadian Oxford Dictionary** were all laid off, casualties of competition from free (and often dubious) online lexicons… **The Hockey Night in Canada theme song** will no longer open the CBC broadcast, after the powers that be decided not to renew their agreement with the jingle's creator, Ivan Fecan immediately snapped up the rights for TSN's hockey nights — **Annika Sorenstam** is "stepping away" from golf after winning 10 majors, to concentrate on her new marriage (and producing miniature golfers?)… **The 40-year mortgage** is kaput, barely a year after the feds okayed its creation… **Buzz Hargrove**, CAW honcho, bowed out in September to join the NHL Players' Association as an adviser to that most downtrodden of workers: the hockey player… **Royal Canadian Air Farce** aired for 35 years, was actually funny for some of that time, and will be remembered for pilloryingpolitical foibles… Four provinces have moved to stop **dialing and driving,** banning the use of phones and handheld gizmos while operating a motor vehicle… Formula One racing ditched the **Montreal Grand Prix**, replacing it with a race in Abu Dhabi… **Canadian Tire's catalogue** will, after 80 years, only be available online, not in a printed version… **Bonnie Fuller**, the Canadian-born editrix, resigned as the chief editorial director of American Media, publisher of *National Enquirer* and *Star* — **Damon Allen**, legendary CFL QB, bowed out at 44, after 23 seasons and a 72,381-yard career passing record — **CBC Radio 2** did away with its classical format in September, introducing hip hop and pop, because so few stations will play that stuff… **Robin Long**, the U.S. Army deserter, lost his bid for asylum in Canada and was deported in July… **David Gamong**, head of the N.B. chocolate firm, named as his replacement the first non-family member in 135 years… Legendary New York investment bank **Lehman Bros.** went belly up in September, signalling global economic doom and gloom… Vancouver Canucks captain and centre **Trevor Linden** retired after 19 seasons—next stop for Mr. Popular the Hockey Hall of Fame? M



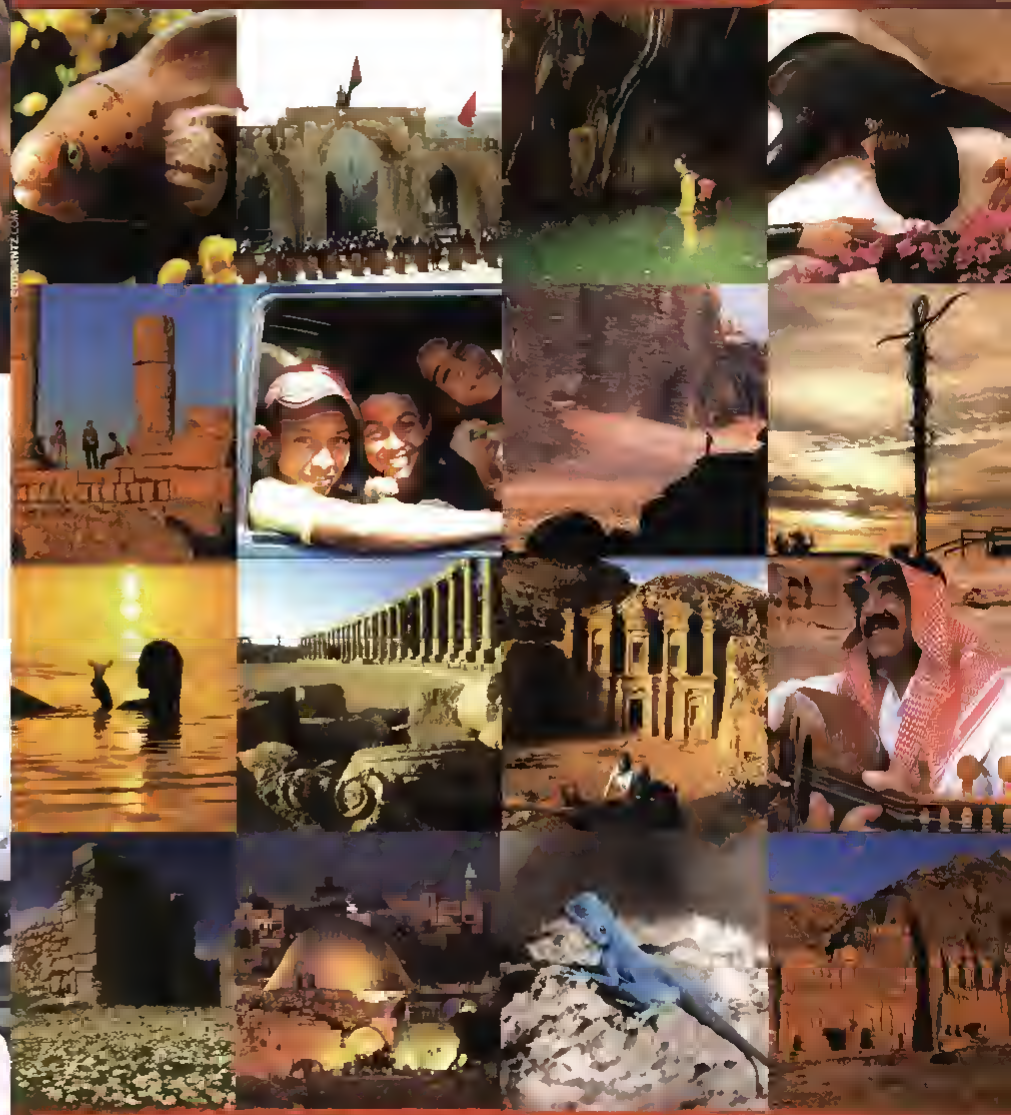
CP GETTY EDWARD PONDI

MEG WHITMAN
The eBay CEO left the Internet auction site she'd presided over for a decade to co-chair John McCain's campaign



SUSUR LEE
The celebrity chef shuttered Susur Toronto's more-minimal-than-thou eatery to start an even more exclusive restaurant in New York

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What a difference a year makes!

2007

Buddhist monks protest in Myanmar

OMG! Will Hillary Rodham Clinton be the first woman president?

Gordon O'Connor

Jennifer Aniston breaks up with model Paul Sculfor

Neil Young

Infrastructure watch bridges collapse in China and Minnesota killing 47

Benazir Bhutto

Cable hit The Sopranos, celebrating boozing womanizers in the Mob goes off air

Teen term that went mainstream

'Not so much'

Michael Cera

Grey's Anatomy dumps Isaiah Washington after he makes anti-gay remarks

Sidney Crosby Roger Federer Tiger Woods

Annoyingly catchy pop anthem Umbrella by Rihanna

auto workers!

Horrifying death involving mass transit: Robert Dziekanski tasered by RCMP at Vancouver airport

Facebook

Afghanistan's toll 30 Canadian troops killed, opium production is 8 200 tonnes

Jerry Zucker

Brangelina adds kid No 4 Pax

2008

Peace in Tibet

OMG! Will Sarah Palin be the first woman president?

Gerry Ritz

Jennifer Aniston breaks up with singer John Mayer

Mickey Rourke

Infrastructure watch cranes collapse in New York and B.C., killing at least 10

Asif Zardari

Cable hit Mad Men celebrating boozing womanizers on Madison Avenue, wins top Emmy

'It's so random'

Teen term that went mainstream

Michael Cera

Grey's Anatomy dumps Brooke Smith after she plays a gay character

Alexander Ovechkin Rafael Nadal Padraig Harrington

Annoyingly catchy pop anthem I Kissed a Girl by Katy Perry

investment bankers!

Horrifying death involving mass transit Tim McLean decapitated by a fellow passenger on a Greyhound bus in Manitoba

Twitter

Afghanistan's toll 23 Canadian troops killed to date opium production is 7700 tonnes

Richard Baker

Brangelina adds kids No 5 and 6 Vivienne and Knox

A year in the life

SUPERSTAR

MERE MORTAL

FLAME-OUT

Maxime Bernier

Cute newish foreign minister aces India trip

By mistake, ministry puts out training manual: U.S. and Israel "likely torture zones"

So much for quiet diplomacy he tells journos Kandahar's scuzzy governor should be replaced

Pledges Burma cyclone aid—can't get our planes to fly there

Revealed he chose her revealing Rideau Hall dress

Nails ditzy cameo on sitcom *How I Met Your Mother*

Regains overnight visits with kids

Back in studio working on new album

Wins three MTV awards

Womanizer released, tops charts

Opens Madonna's concert in L.A.

Britney Spears

Kids' custody goes to ex, she loses all visitation rights

Admitted to an L.A. psych ward for the second time in a month

Court puts dad in charge of her life—he ditches slimy "manager"

Disclosed his ex, Julie Couillard, has biker gang ties

Resigns, turns out he left secret docs at Couillard's place

Foreign Affairs report: his carelessness demeaned Canada's standing in NATO

Mother's book says self-professed virgin wasn't at 14, and took drugs at 15

Couillard tell-all published, suddenly he's sympathetic—she's a grandiose gold digger

Re-elected MP with 63 per cent of vote in Beauce

New cabinet announced and he's not in it

WINTER

SPRING

SUMMER

FALL

Winners



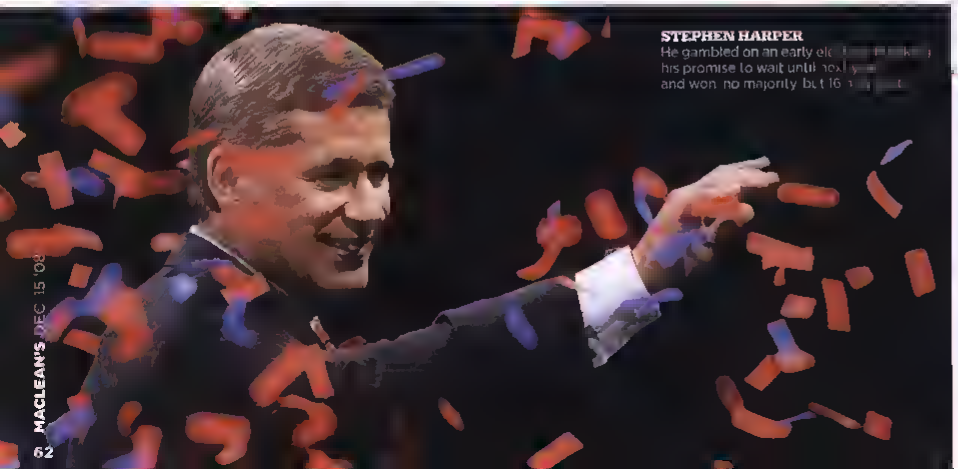
CAROL HUYNH
Her parents' boat people fled Vietnam and settled in Hazelton B.C., where Carol was born in 1980. She defeated the world champion to take wrestling gold in Beijing—in her tiny hometown they stayed up all night to watch the match live.



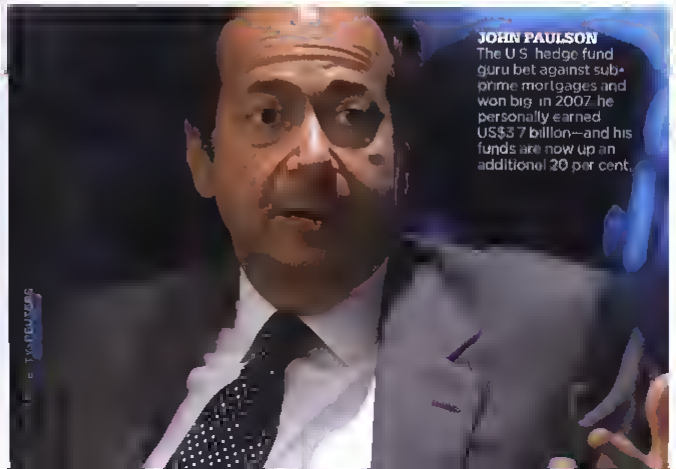
ROBERT MUGABE
Zimbabwe's president stole the 2008 elections, ruined the economy and terrorized the opposition as well as voters, yet the 84-year-old has successfully resisted all attempts to remove him from power.



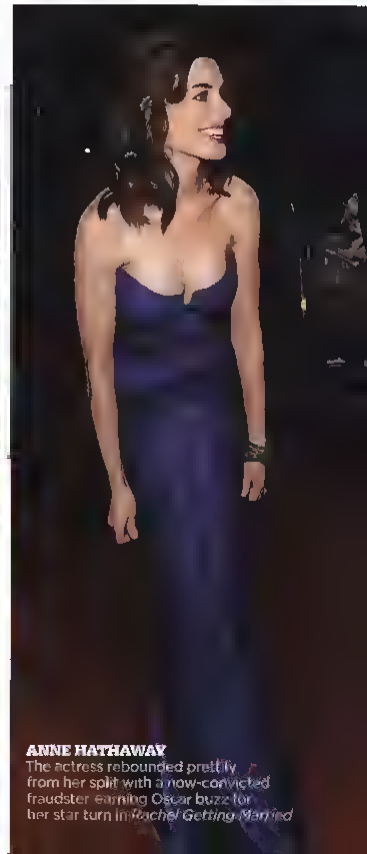
RAWI HAGE
The Montreal cabbie-turned-author won the $160,000 IMPAC prize in June for his first novel. His second, *Cockroach*, was nominated for Canada's top three awards.



STEPHEN HARPER
He gambled on an early election, broke his promise to wait until next year and won no majority, but 16 more seats.



JOHN PAULSON
The U.S. hedge fund guru bet against subprime mortgages and won big. In 2007, he personally earned US$3.7 billion—and his funds are now up an additional 20 per cent.



ANNE HATHAWAY
The actress rebounded prettily from her split with a now-convicted fraudster, earning Oscar buzz for her star turn in *Rachel Getting Married*.



TINA FEY
There was the slew of awards for her quirky sitcom *30 Rock*, the successful entree to the big screen with *Baby Mama*, and then the gods dropped Sarah Palin in the comedienne's lap. Fey's impression of the Alaska governor sent *Saturday Night Live*'s ratings through the roof.



ALEXANDER OVECHKIN
The Washington Capitals left-winger won virtually everything in '08.

Winners

Left fielder **Jason Bay**, the pride of Trail, B.C., hit the big time after being traded to the Red Sox and proving his worth in the playoffs. Laundry manager **Bill Kirkland** won an Excellence in B.C. Healthcare award for designing a hospital gown that doesn't leave patients' behinds exposed. **Wii Fit**, an interactive program that gets gamers off the couch to simulate sporting moves, is on track to outsell Grand Theft Auto IV. Canadian medical researchers **Samuel Weiss, Nehama Sonenberg** and **Alan Bernstein** won the most prestigious award you've never heard of, the Gairdner, often a precursor to a Nobel. A **12-year-old Québécoise** successfully sued her father, who didn't let her go on a school trip after she misbehaved. **Canada's wilderness** had a banner year, with an exponential expansion of nature reserves, particularly in the Northwest Territories.

AP, GETTY

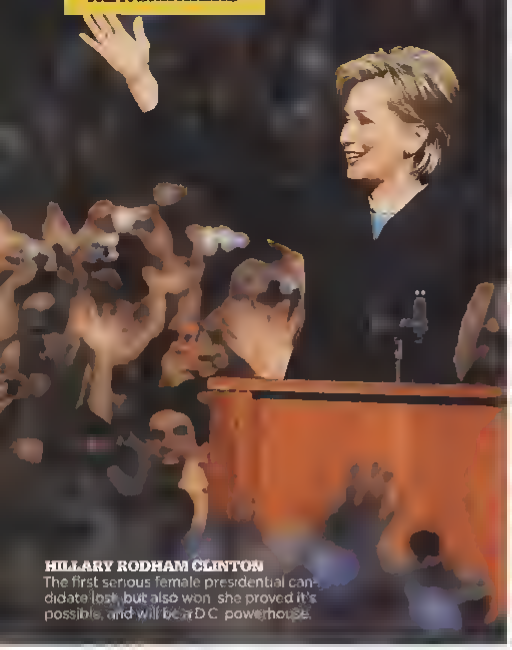


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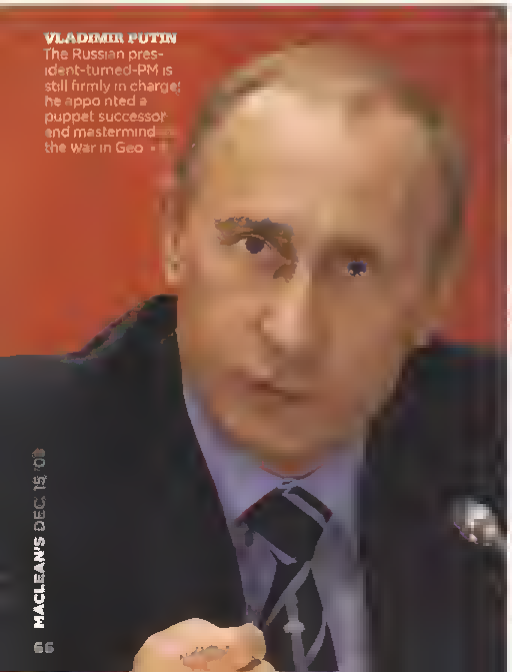
www.philips.ca/arcitec

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HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
The first serious female presidential candidate lost, but also won: she proved it's possible, and will be a D.C. powerhouse.

Winners



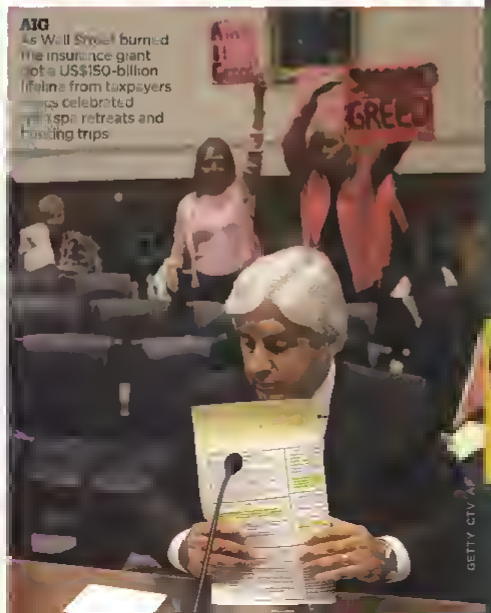
VLADIMIR PUTIN
The Russian president-turned-PM is still firmly in charge; he appointed a puppet successor and mastermind[ed] the War in Geo[rgia]



FLASHPOINT
CBS's cop-show [was] renewed for a second season on CBS—the first original drama on a U.S. network [since] Due South.



LEWIS HAMILTON
At 23, the youngest driver ever to win the Formula One championship—not bad for a Brit in his sophomore year on the circuit



AIG
As Wall Street burned, the insurance giant got a US$150-billion lifeline from taxpayers [and] celebrated [with] spa retreats and hunting trips

GETTY; CTV; AP

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Losers

OIL SANDS
Major environmental concerns + out-of-control costs + a sudden plunge in oil prices = bad news for Alberte

ICELAND
Collapsed currency massive layoffs widespread overnight poverty—this is what happens when an overheated financial sector is poorly regulated

PERVEZ MUSHARRAF
Pakistan s president was forced out via a crushing electoral defeat after Benazir Bhutto s assassination. His legacy? Al Qaeda and the Taliban are now entrenched in Pakistan

SHARON STONE
The actress suggested China s devastating earthquake was well deserved "karma for mistreating the Tibetans Her own karma? Losing a custody battle with her ex after musing that their eight-year old needed Botox

THE BIG THREE AUTOMAKERS
The one-time powerhouse of the North American economy was reduced to begging for government handouts in 2008





JOHN MCCAIN
The Republican senator besmirched his own hard-won reputation for honour and decency with a series of erratic and cynical moves the Palin pick "the fundamentals of the economy are sound" mantra the angry divisive campaign

ORDINARY PEOPLE
We did everything right worked hard bought a house saved for retirement—and now we re screwed Why? See below



CÉLINE DION
Apparently the wacky chanteuse was in the habit of using 25 million litres of water at her Florida estate annually despite e drought



BIRDS
Populations of North America s 20 most common bird species have been halved in the last 40 years Their habitat is being wiped out



Economic Indicators

+23.2%



Annual percentage ncrease in the price of resale homes in Saskatchewan Overall however Canadian prices fell 5 4 per cent in the same period

$480,000,000,000

Volkswagen s worth after hedge funds bet the wrong way on the German automaker s stock and were forced to cover their positions VW's share price nearly quintupled in two days, briefly making it the most valuable company in the world



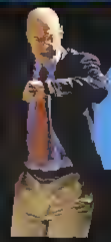
77.31 CENTS

The loonie s value on Nov 20 Just a year ago the dollar was trading at US$1 06.



229

Number of days after the crash of Bear Stearns that Michael Alix, the investment bank's former risk management guru, was hired by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to rate the health of other banks



48

Number of hours the U.S treasury secretary subscribed to "moral hazard" the notion that bailing out reckless businesses encourages future imprudence Two days after letting Lehmen Bros. fail Henry Paulson threw AIG a US$85 billion lifeline.

203,000

Net number of jobs created in Canada this year to date

299

Number of U.S lending operations that have "imploded" in the mortgage meltdown



$9,000

Auction price of a pair of Queen Victoria's monogrammed bloomers

TSX 10090.63 -712.72

$50.9 BILLION

Loss in market value of Saskatchewan's Potash Corp since its share price peaked in June.

$1,392,994,282,413

Increase in the total U.S public debt in 2008 to date.

$390,000

Price paid at auction for a rare $500 Canadian banknote from 1911 featuring a picture of Queen Mary



-42%

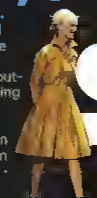
Amount by which the S&P/TSX composite index plunged between Sept. 26 and Nov 25.

18%

Number of American mortgage holders who owe more to lenders than their homes are actually worth.

Estimated cost of one of Cindy McCain's outfits, including accessories, at the Republican convention

$300,000



ISTOCK, REUTERS, GETTY

Twits



HEATHER MILLS wins $48 million in divorce court celebrates by throwing water on ex's lawyer



TRIPP ISENHOUR The pro golfer killed a hawk whose cries were interrupting his TV spot

ISENHOUR wins this birdie was protected—and it took him more than six swings to finish it off



PIERRE DUCHESNE Quebec's lieutenant governor queue-jumps the ferry to his island home—until locals say get in line fencypants



NADMI CAMPBELL The supermodel went berserk on a plane, attacking several cops

CAMPBELL takes it—for spitting, kicking and ordering the captain to find her "f--king bags"

ISENHOUR who, after the bird's remains were interred on the course, claimed "I am an animal lover"



KELLY TILGHMAN Golf Channel anchor "jokes" Tiger Woods's challengers should "lynch him in a back alley"



GEERT WILDERS Ultra-nationalist Dutch politician makes a film denouncing Islam (and boosting intolerance)

WILDERS gleefully inflames anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe

WILDERS trumps Johnston twits procreate regularly—promoting hatred takes a special breed



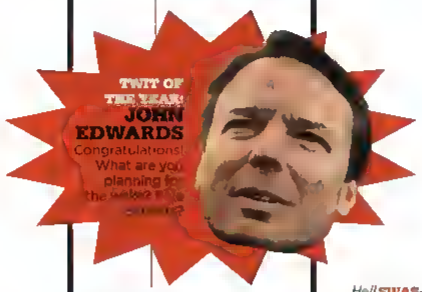
CAROL THATCHER The Iron Lady's daughter pens a book describing in detail how Mom has lost her marbles



LEVI JOHNSTON On MySpace Bristol Palin's babydaddy proclaims himself a "f-kin redneck" who doesn't want kids

JOHNSTON Will this teen leave dirty diapers to the little woman? You betcha!

EDWARDS' excuse for infidelity: [My wife] was in remission." Well, then! Guess that makes it okay



WILDERS makes the finals: freedom of preach is not freedom of speech



TWITS™ CORPORATE SPONSORS.
Tim Hortons cans a worker who gives free Timbit to toddler (later forced to rehire her). American Airlines forgets to secure aircraft wiring and more than 1,000 flights are cancelled, stranding 110,000 travellers. Pakistan tries to block domestic access to YouTube but wipes out access for two-thirds of the world

EDWARDS denies mistress's baby is his: visits her and wee one at 3 a.m. in hotel rooms merely to chat

EDWARDS' apology "If you want to beat me up—feel free." Okay!



JOHN EDWARDS Ex-presidential hopeful admits cheating on his terminally ill wife while she stumped for him in 2006



ANDREA MACMILLAN Ditched her husband on Cuban honeymoon, took up with resort's married bartender—days later he said "*hasta la vista*"

STELMACH'S excuse: "Lots of work to do in Alberta." No kidding



ED STELMACH Preem of a top-polluting province bails early on a premiers' meeting on climate change



MAXIM The super-serious men's mag reviews a Black Crowes record without bothering to listen to it

Advantage **SWASTIKA MOM** who brags that her seven-year-old can recite a white supremacist credo

Hell **SWASTIKA MOM!** Now that Manitoba's child protection agency has seized your kids, you have more time to promote your ideas

WOODFORD prevails, saving "Capt. Calamity" cost thousands—now banned from bodies of water larger than a bathtub



MAX MOSLEY F1 boss sues paper for saying his S&M orgy had a Nazi theme—the German commands and Luftwaffe jacket? Pure coincidence



SWASTIKA MOM sends daughter to school in Winnipeg with Nazi symbol drawn on her arm



XI CHANGE GAO B.C. crab fisherman mows through a pod of killer whales in high-speed boat



ANTHONY WOODFORD The novice skipper rescued thrice in three days by U.K. coast guard





Class Acts

Four distinguished Canadian soldiers
The Star of Military Valour, for "distinguished and valiant service in the presence of the enemy," has been awarded only eight times since its creation. Four were handed out this year for combat in Afghanistan, to Maj. David Quick, Sgt. William MacDonald, Cpl. James Ball and, posthumously, to Capt. Jonathan Snyder, who was killed in Kandahar in June.

La China
Abandoned by his teen mother on a cold night in a field outside Buenos Aires, a newborn was rescued by a mutt. La China somehow carried the boy home, covered him with a rag, and nestled him between her puppies. The dog's owner found the baby, perfectly healthy, the next day.

Geddy Lee
When the Rush rocker learned that a collection of more than 200 rare autographed baseballs from the Negro Leagues was up for sale, he bought them for an undisclosed price and donated them to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

Percy Schmeiser
Ten years after agribusiness giant Monsanto sued the Saskatchewan farmer for violating its Roundup Ready canola patent—plants from the firm's seeds were found on his farm—the 77-year-old, who said all along that the seeds were blown onto his land, won $660. Why did this legal odyssey consume a decade? Schmeiser's refusal to sign the kind of gag order huge companies usually insist the little guy sign. Today, he's free to talk.

Michael Johnson
Not bothering to wait for the official inquiry, the American sprinter returned his Olympic gold medal for the 4×400-m relay immediately after teammate Antonio Pettigrew testified that he'd taken a banned substance during the 2000 Games. "I know that the medal was not fairly won," Johnson said. "It doesn't belong to me."

Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law
When Heath Ledger died in the midst of filming *The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus*, it turned out his old will didn't make provisions for Matilda, his three-year-old daughter. So Depp et al., who signed on to the movie to finish their friend's role, donated their salaries to the little girl.

Linda Keen
In November 2007, after the Chalk River nuclear plant failed to make safety upgrades to an aged reactor, the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission ordered it to stay offline—a decision later overturned by Parliament, because the reactor produced essential medical isotopes. Keen, who said the risk of restarting the thing was 1,000 times above allowable standards, stood her ground with grace. Hours before she was to testify to a parliamentary committee in January, she was fired.

Kathy Cox
Georgia's school superintendent was the first US$1 million winner on *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?* She gave it all to schools for the deaf and blind. M

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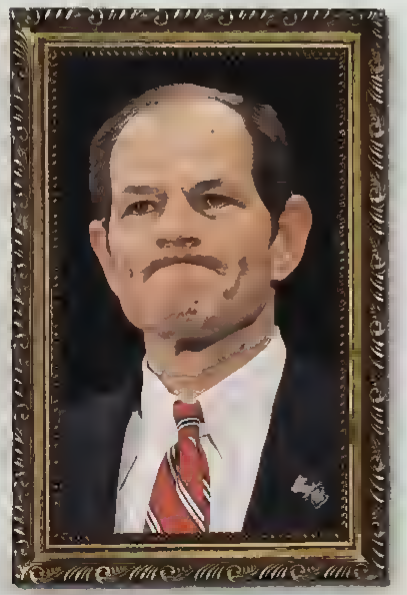
Rogues gallery



DICK CHENEY As Bush's *consigliere* slithered away from D.C., a judge ordered him not to destroy any of his documents, which will be key to figuring out exactly what the most powerful and secretive vice-president in history actually did for eight long years.



SARAH PALIN Alaska's governor campaigned as a good ol' hockey mom—decked out in US$150,000 of clothes paid for by Republican operatives. An investigation found she violated good ol' ethics by trying to get her ex-brother-in-law fired.



ELIOT SPITZER New York's self-righteous governor—nickname: the Sheriff of Wall Street—quit after he was caught spending thousands on high-end hookers.



HEINRICH KIEBER Computer geek at a Liechtenstein bank made millions selling clients' secret info to nations hunting down tax cheats.



SEAN AVERY The trash-talking "Pest" inspired a new hockey rule in 2008: wave your stick in a goalie's face, and you get two minutes in the penalty box.



RICHARD FULD Lehman's CEO said his US$500-million compensation proves capitalism works—just not for the rank and file now on the dole after Lehman's crash.



THAN SHWE Burma's secretive dictator didn't warn of an approaching cyclone, which killed more than 150,000, then kiboshed aid for survivors.



PATRICK ROY The NHL great was suspended from coaching duties after visibly enjoying watching his son, a goalie for the Quebec Rem parts, maul an opposing netminder.



SILVIO BERLUSCONI The Italian president swept back into power, appointing a showgirl to his cabinet and praising Obama's suntan.



MILEY CYRUS The pop princess with the ultra-clean image happily posed nude for Vanity Fair, then claimed "I never intended for this to happen"—and at her Sweet 16 bash, the millionairess charged admission.



HANS KRISTIAN RAUSING The feckless Tetra Pak heir was charged with crack cocaine possession shortly after his wife was caught sneaking drugs into a party at the U.S. Embassy in London.



ARRESTED, CONVICTED OR BEHIND BARS **Conrad Black** fraud **Dawn Wells** of *Gilligan's Island* reckless driving **Tatum O'Neal** crack possession **Pete Doherty** breaching parole Canadian chef **Brenda Martin** accepting illicit funds in Mexico **Ryan O'Neal** drug possession **Heather Locklear** DUI *Girls Gone Wild* honcho **Joe Francis** child abuse and prostitution

GETTY; JUDY PATRICK/ALASKA STOCK
AP; GETTY; CP

Mergers

Scarlett Johansson and Ryan Reynolds
The sultry Woody Allen crush married the forgettable (okay, okay, except for his chiselled chest) Vancouver-born actor, Alanis Morissette's ex-squeeze, in a quiet ceremony at uber-luxe Clayoquot Wilderness Resort

Tech Cominco and Fording
The Vancouver-based mining company gobbled up Fording Canadian Coal Trust for a reported $14-billion cash-and-stock deal, thereby proving that not every commodity company in the nation would be consumed by foreigners.

Ellen Degeneres and Portia de Rossi
The talk show host wed her long time actress girlfriend smack in the midst of one of the nastiest presidential campaigns in history, yet no candidate publicly referred to her as "Ellen Degenerate." Plus, the 50-year-old comedienne got a new gig: spokesmodel for CoverGirl! We're evolving, people

Peter Phillips and Autumn Kelly
The Queen's grandson met the Montreal commoner at a Grand Prix a few years back. Their May wedding was a yawnfest, but stirred up the requisite royal scandal when the couple sold snaps to *Hello!* The Queen was not amused and, mysteriously, the groom, employed by the Royal Bank of Scotland, was transferred to Hong Kong

Philip Morris and Rothmans
The ciggy giant metastasized, acquiring the last chunk of Canadian-based Rothmans, mere moments after the latter settled a cigarette smuggling case.



GETTY TORONTO STAR



IMAGINE TWO OF THE BEST, TOGETHER.

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Mergers



MI5 and gay wannabe spies
To expand its reach, the fabled British spy agency threw open the closet door to welcome gay recruits. Apparently, one queen isn't enough.

Bristol Palin and Levi Johnston
Drinkin', huntin', hockey playin' self-described "f–kin' redneck" knocked up the plucky daughter of the pro-abstinence, ante-abortion Republican vice-presidential nominee, and quickly decided he's the marryin' and settlin' down type. Sarah Palin's way with a shotgun reportedly had nothing to do with it.

Cirque du Soleil and Dubai
The big-top meets Vegas operation is now 20 per cent owned by the government of the oil-rich emirate. However, founder Guy Laliberté insists, "I'm still the captain of the boat."

Steve Nash and the Women's Soccer League
The Canadian basketball great snapped up a share of the San Francisco-based seven-team start up, enthused by "the opportunity to put some of these wonderfully talented athletes in a setting to inspire a whole generation below them." The point guard, a two-time MVP, has twin four-year old girls.

Royal Bank of Canada and Phillips, Hager & North
Canada's biggest bank picked up the Vancouver-based private mutual fund firm for $1.4 billion in stock—table scraps, in other words, for the Royal, which now calls itself Canada's largest retail mutual fund company (bragworthy, before the meltdown).

Greta Hodgkinson and Etienne Lavigne
The ridiculously attractive principal dancer and first soloist of the National Ballet of Canada tied the knot in July, under the approving eye of artistic director Karen Kain.

Nelly Furtado and Demacio Castellon
In October, the husky-voiced pop star revealed that, oh yeah, she exchanged vows with a sound engineer in the summer. The newly weds worked on her album *Loose*, which spawned such singles as *Promiscuous*—not that that should have any bearing on a pre-nup.

Len Barrie & Oren Koulee and the Tampa Bay Lightning
The Canadian NHL vet and the slasher-film mogul led the buy-out of the Florida hockey franchise. So far, the odd couple has ditched Jay Feaster, the Stanley Cup winning GM, parted acrimoniously with coach John Tortorella (and then jettisoned his replacement) and made some weird player moves. Their salvation? Top draft pick Steve Stamkos.

U.S. Treasury and Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac
When the private firms, which own or backstop half of all U.S. mortgages, were circling the drain in September, the U.S. Treasury took over.

U.S. Interior Department and the energy industry
Free cocaine, concert tickets, wild sex—who said working for Uncle Sam is boring? The Interior Department's inspector general, which is responsible for most federally owned land, reported that employees responsible for collecting US$10 billion in royalties annually got in bed, literally, with representatives of the oil and gas industry they were supposed to be over seeing. Along with sex, they also accepted free meals, paintball outings, and other no-strings-attached goodies.

Beyoncé and Jay-Z
The long-time companions got married in April, though neither the gazillionaire singer nor the hip-hop mogul owned up to it for months. Instead of exchanging wedding rings, they got matching tattoos on their fingers. I'm not a "traditional woman," explained the 27-year-old actress/songwriter/impresario, who nevertheless has been blinding her entourage with a US$5-million diamond ring.

Yangtze turtles
Last spring, two geriatric Yangtze soft-shell turtles mated—alas, to no avail. Although the female, the last of her gender in the world, produced eggs following her dalliance with the 100-year-old, none of them survived. The pair—fortified by a calcium-rich diet and, one presumes, Barry White—will go at it again next year.

Ben Mulroney and Jessica Brownstein
The ex-PM's son wed in the fall, surprising observers who believed his heart belonged to a tanning bed.

Jan Morris and Elizabeth Tuckniss
In 1972, successful British writer James Morris became Jan, thanks to a sex change. But because U.K. law did not permit same-sex marriage, Jan had to divorce the woman she'd married back when she was a man. However, the pair never actually broke up. This year, the 80-something couple exchanged vows again. Some things, it seems, simply cannot be changed. M

GETTY

Tetley Red Tea from Africa.
Unique as its birthplace
tetleyred.ca

Break ups

Michael Bublé and Emily Blunt
The official version: long distance and busy schedules tore the singer and actress apart. Read: the relationship went south shortly after pictures emerged of the toaster-headed crooner in the arms of a young blond.

Jeremiah Wright and Barack Obama
The pastor officiated at Obama's wedding, baptized his kids and inspired the title *The Audacity of Hope*. But Wright got the boot after clips of his denunciations of the U.S.—"God damn America!" was one catchy refrain—surfaced.

ACE and Jazz
ACE Aviation Holdings Inc.—Air Canada, for short—sold off its last chunks of Aeroplan and its rinky-dink regional carrier Jazz in May for $435 million. The sales are a further breakup of the empire.

Mutt Lange and Shania Twain
The reclusive producer split from the Timmins, Ont., songstress after reportedly falling for their "house manager." Shania underwent retail therapy in Toronto, shortly thereafter, while Lange turned to another train wreck: the new Nickelback album.

Quebec and France
Remember the last time a French president made a big address to Quebec's masses? De Gaulle's "*Vive le Québec libre*" inspired separatists. So imagine Ottawa's glee when Nicolas Sarkozy gave Canada a big sloppy: "I don't know why a fraternal love of Quebec would have to be nourished through defiance toward Canada."

Hugo Chávez and the Bank Of Venezuela
Venezuela's president continued his oil-soaked socialist agenda, "liberating" a bank from the dastardly clutches of a Spanish concern, then nationalizing it.

Phil Collins and Orianne Cevey
The schmaltzy crooner/drummer ponied up $50 million to leave his nine-year marriage. He has a knack for shedding wives: his first exited in 1980; in 1994, he dumped the second via fax.

Harry Laforme and the Indian schools commission
The head of the native residential schools commission inquiry, established after the settlement of a class-action suit, bailed after barely six months. The high-ranking judge said the other commissioners wouldn't listen to him.

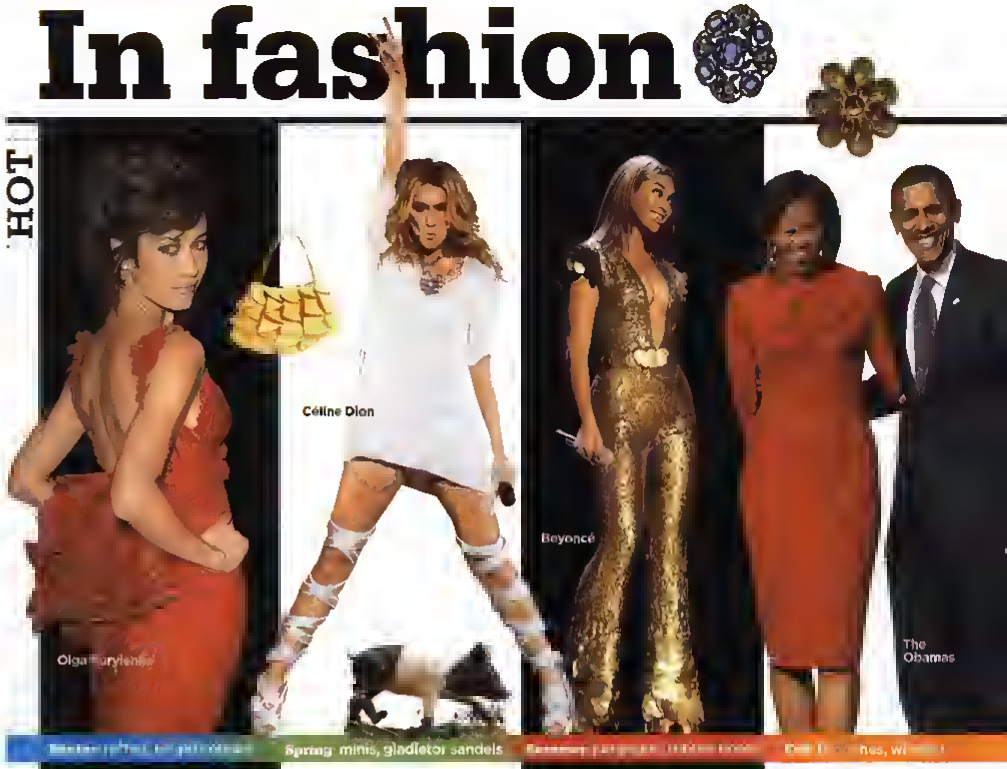
Sarah McLachlan and Ashwin Sood
The singer and her long-time drummer prayed their marriage after 11 years. McLachlan declared herself bummed out, but the breakup has spawned at least one hit: *U Want Me 2*.

The CBC and its backlist
CBC rang in the New Year by stealthily selling off its international sales catalogue to a U.K. company for an undisclosed sum. Taxpayers weren't consulted—nor, apparently, was the board of directors, until the deal was done.

Madonna and Guy Ritchie
Ah, matrimony. One minute you're all blissed out, the next, your husband complains that sleeping with you is like "cuddling up to a piece of gristle." Such was the director's estimation of his final days with the 50-year old singer. He will reportedly get joint custody of their two sons and has said "no thanks" to alimony. She has reportedly sought solace in the arms of A-Rod, whose ex-wife blames Madonna for their divorce. M



In fashion





GETTY

Royals are just like us!



THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO RENOVATE!
Queen Elizabeth II has been putting off repairs to the palace roof, but this year, with leaks threatening Old Masters, she asked the government to chip in $24 million. The reply: no, ma'am.



THEY CAN'T COMMIT!
Prince William and Kate Middleton are going strong after last year's temporary breakup. The royal ditherer's new excuse for not popping the question to "Waity Katie"? He's signed up for five years of helicopter search and rescue—no time to shop for a ring.

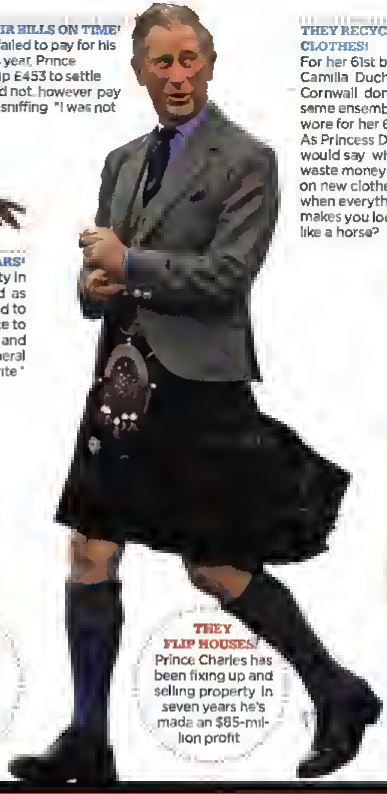
THEY DON'T WANT TO DIE!
Prince Philip, 87, checked into the hospital with a chest infection, looking like death. Later, one paper declared him a goner: the guy had prostate cancer. The Queen's husband, who rarely responds to such items, issued a furious denial: no cancer. Subtext: still virile, even after a lifetime of scuttling along behind a woman dressed like a sofa.



THEY DON'T PAY THEIR BILLS ON TIME!
In 1651, King Charles II failed to pay for his soldiers' uniforms. This year, Prince Charles had to cough up £453 to settle the clothiers' bill. He did not, however, pay the 357 years' interest, sniffing, "I was not born yesterday."

THEY FIGHT WARS!
Prince Harry saw active duty in Afghanistan. The "spare" said as have so many soldiers posted to the parched paradise: "It's nice to be away from all the press and the papers and all the general shite that they write."

THEY TAKE BORING VACATIONS!
Princess Anne has a new cause: visiting all 209 lighthouses in Scotland.



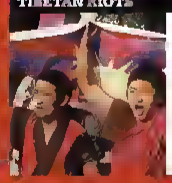
THEY FLIP HOUSES!
Prince Charles has been fixing up and selling property. In seven years, he's made an $85-million profit.

THEY RECYCLE CLOTHES!
For her 61st birthday, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, donned the same ensemble she wore for her 60th. As Princess Di would say: why waste money on new clothes, when everything makes you look like a horse?



Made in China

TIBETAN RIOTS



PARTY LINE: We've provided endless civilizing benefits, out of the goodness of our hearts. Why can't those ingrates just accept them?

FACT CHECK: Ordinary Tibetans and their beloved monks exploded in riots following years of increasingly aggressive oppression and exploitation.

OLYMPIC ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN



PARTY LINE: Pollution? What pollution? The quality of air and water will be perfectly acceptable for the Beijing Olympics.

FACT CHECK: Huge swaths of the country had to shut down—no industry, no cars—in a last-ditch attempt to clear smog. Kinda. The army was sent out to skim algae manually from the sailing venue. Even so, athletes and tourists weren't impressed.

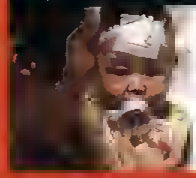
SICHUAN EARTHQUAKE



PARTY LINE: Earthquakes kill—sad, but unavoidable.

FACT CHECK: Shoddy construction caused schools to collapse in May; about 10,000 students died.

POISONED MILK PRODUCTS



PARTY LINE: A few rogue producers didn't tell us they'd been selling milk products laced with melamine, an industrial additive.

FACT CHECK: The government knew much earlier than they let on, thereby imperilling more than 54,000 babies.

BEIJING OLYMPICS OPENING CEREMONY



PARTY LINE: What a glorious exempla of Chinese ingenuity and creativity!

FACT CHECK: Lin Miaoke, 9, lip-synched the solo—the real seven-year-old singer was "too ugly"—and perfect fireworks were digitally inserted into the broadcast.

LAND REFORM



PARTY LINE: Our innovative policy will transform the lives of China's 800 million peasants, giving them more control over their land.

FACT CHECK: Communists are worried about a revolution they can't control, grinding poverty and corrupt officials who specialize in seizing land led to 74,000 "disturbances" in 2005.

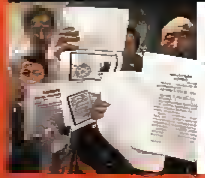
OLYMPIC MEDAL STANDINGS



PARTY LINE: We wani We topped the medal standings wIh 51 golds—our athletic program is the best.

FACT CHECK: Athletes are separated from their families at a young age, and forced to train 24/7 in a brutally regimented system—with minimal education.

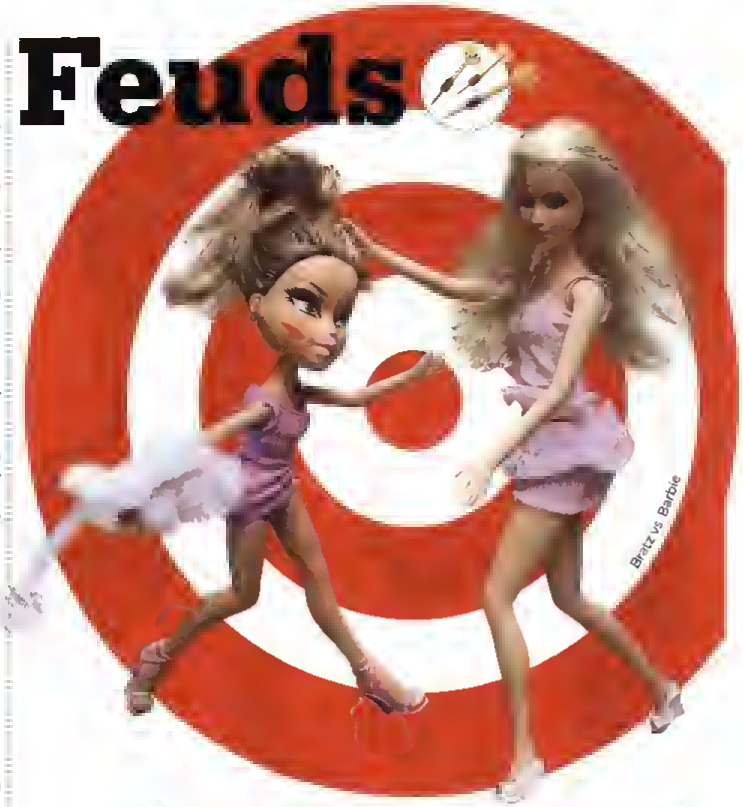
FREE SPEECH



PARTY LINE: Want to protest during the Olympics? Go ahead. We love protesters!

FACT CHECK: The government refused all 77 applications to protest from its own citizens, and sentenced two elderly wannabe dissenters to a year of "re-education through labour."

Feuds



Barbie vs. Bratz
She's survived nearly five decades, a ban in Saudi Arabia, and an anatomically incorrect boyfriend named Ken. Yet Barbie's toughest challenger may be a 25 cm tramp. Bratz have usurped her supremacy in key markets. Mattel, Barbie's corporate parent, fought back, successfully suing the upstart, turns out Bratz's creator was actually employed by Mattel at the time of conception. Even Barbie, it seems, can't command monogamy.

Lebanon vs. Israel
Not satisfied with endless bombings and bloodshed, the Middle Eastern countries are set to do battle over pulverized chickpeas. The Lebanese Industrialists Association has launched a lawsuit to stop its neighbour from claiming that hummus is Israeli. "It is not enough they are stealing our land. They are also stealing our civilization and our cuisine," fumed LIA president Fadi Abboud.

The Tories vs. Insite
Ignoring a raft of evidence and a seal of approval from the World Health Organization, the Harper government decided that safe injection sites are a bad thing.



Moving to shut down the Vancouver-based program Insite, then-minister of health Tony Clement said giving safe needles to IV drug users is "harm addiction." B.C.'s Supreme Court disagreed, siding with Insite. Stay tuned for the inevitable trip to the country's highest court.

Boris Berezovsky vs. Roman Abramovich
The Russian billionaires, both resident in London, are at each other's throats over soured business ventures. In April, Berezovsky launched a $4 billion lawsuit, claiming his fellow oligarch told him to fork over his assets for a bargain basement price or the Kremlin would seize them. One thing's certain: lawyers will make a bundle off this pair.

Christie Brinkley vs. Peter Cook
The former supermodel left her architect hubby of 10 years after she discovered he was canoodling with an 18-year-old assistant. During the high-profile divorce, the cover girl said she was only looking out for their children's best interests when she okayed a public airing of Cook's sex tape along with a myriad of unwholesome details regarding his Internet surfing habits. Dad caved, Mom won, kids lost.

J.D. Irving Ltd. vs. blue herons
It took nearly two years, but blue herons finally got their day in court. J.D. Irving Ltd., the New Brunswick forestry giant, was fined $60,000 because its workers mowed down a nesting colony of the big birds while constructing a logging road in 2006. The homewrecking company only paid up after losing a constitutional challenge to the Migratory Birds Convention Act.



JEFF HARRIS OR GETTY ISTOCK AP

Salman Rushdie vs. bodyguard
Just to be clear: fundamentalists' scourge Salman Rushdie is *not* an unclean slob nicknamed Scruffy. When Ron Evans, a police officer who worked briefly on the author's security detail, claimed as much in a tell-all book, Rushdie went to court to defend his personal hygiene. He won, his publisher pulped the book's first run. Rushdie chose not to seek damages.

Stuart Ross vs. David Blitzer
Stuart Ross allegedly tried to extort US$11 million from his son-in-law, David Blitzer, a London based exec with the now-struggling private equity firm Blackstone Group. Ross, who's estranged from his daughter, told Blitzer he would ruin his career and keep harassing his family if he didn't pony up. Instead, Blitzer called the authorities, and his in-law, who made his name licensing Smurfs, now faces seven years in prison.

Stephen Harper vs. Brian Mulroney
They used to be such good pals. But then Harper played Pontius Pilate and allowed Karlheinz Schreiber, a.k.a. Mulroney's palm-greaser, to stay in the country to testify before the government inquiry into the Airbus affair. Uh oh. An inquiry puts such a strain on a friendship.

Hindus vs. Christians
In August, inter-religious violence erupted in India after Christians were blamed for the death of a Hindu preacher in Orissa state. More than 30 people, mostly Christians, were killed while hundreds of churches and thousands of homes burned. One nun reported being gang-raped by a mob, other Christians were warned to convert, or else. "This is all totally politically motivated" by Hindu hard-liners in the run up to next year's elections, says Orissa Christian leader Ranjit Nayak. Worryingly, those same fundamentalists are targeting Muslims.



Fox News vs. the truth
First, the right-wing U.S. network aired a diatribe critiquing a *New York Times* article on cable TV ratings by Jacques Steinberg, accompanied by grossly distorted photos of the writer and his editor. Then there was anchor Sean Hannity's so-called documentary, *Obama & Friends*, prominently featuring Andy Martin, a proud anti-Semite who is credited with starting those preposterous "Obama is a Muslim" rumours. Maybe freedom of the press is overrated.

Texas vs. polygamy
In April, Texas Rangers raided the Yearning for Zion Ranch near Eldorado, removing more than 400 children of the breakaway Mormon sect, amid allegations of underage marriages and other abuses. Though most of the kids were returned to their families after courts ruled they weren't in immediate danger,



authorities didn't stop investigating. Subsequently, nine men were indicted on a variety of sexual assault charges, including the cult leader, Warren Jeffs, who's already in prison for arranging weddings between girls and geezers. Allegedly, he himself married a 12 year-old girl from the ranch.

Malaysia vs. Avril Lavigne
In August, the Southeast Asian government banned a concert by the pint-sized pride of Napanee, Ont., judging her "too sexy" for Malaysia. The government acquiesced after the promoter promised "no negative elements" in the show. Not including Lavigne's hairstyle, that is.



National Gallery of Canada vs. David Franklin
Locked in a bitter squabble with Gallery director Pierre Théberge, Franklin, his deputy, was, in a span of two months, fired, reinstated, fired again, then allowed to work from home. The causes of this Byzantine saga, which found its way to the courts, remain murky. But apparently the kerfuffle started over a union request for gallery emails regarding yet another fired curator. Among the treasures unearthed: a missive calling co-workers a "bunch of wankers."

The Gadhafis vs. Switzerland
The landlocked nation, which imports 50 per cent of its oil from Libya, braced for payback after Geneva police detained Moammar Gadhafi's son Hannibal and his pregnant wife on charges of assaulting their servants. The pair had checked into a luxury hotel, awaiting the birth of their child. Though the legal trouble vanished after the downtrodden domestics received an unexpected "bonus," the oil-rich nation still retaliated, withdrawing billions in assets from Swiss banks and cutting off shipments of crude.

Kate Hudson vs. 220 Laboratories
This movie writes itself. Perky blond actress Kate Hudson starts an eco-friendly hair care company with her sassy stylist David Babaii, pledging to donate 10 per cent of their take to a fund that saves cute animals. But tragedy strikes when another company sues the pair for allegedly stealing its secret volcanic ash formula! We're rooting for a courtroom finale, hair gel and accusations flying. M





Huh?

Coincidentally enough, they own a convenience store

The Jackson family of Jellicoe, Ont., managed to win the lottery 167 times, raking in roughly $1.2 million between 1995 and 2004. A police investigation found no evidence of fraud. "Just lucky, I guess," said matriarch Corrie Jackson.

Sunday, bloody Sunday

Nicole Kidman continued the tradition of witless celeb baby names with "Sunday"—though her daughter was actually born on a Monday.

Sorry, Mr. Balsillie, he was simply more qualified

William "Boots" Del Biaggio is under bankruptcy protection and FBI investigation. He has been repeatedly sued for fraud. And, thanks to NHL commish Gary Bettman, he is a minority owner of the Nashville Predators—an honour denied RIM honcho Jim Balsillie, who offered the earth for the franchise.

Croc and roll

Louis Vuitton hired the remarkably lifelike Rolling Stone, Keith Richards, to shill for its astronomically priced bags—he appeals to that niche market: the reformed druggie gazillionaire.

Enema of the state

In a bid to attract more tourism, Zheleznovodsk, a Russian town known for its spas, erected a 360-kg, $42,000 bronze statue of an enema, supported by three cherubic figures.

Now, ultimate 'heroin,' that we could understand

In a British poll of under-25s, drug-addled singer Amy Winehouse beat out Princess Di and Mother Teresa to be crowned "The Ultimate Heroine."

Overseeing the torture showed real leadership

Canadian military brass retroactively promoted Col. Serge Labbé—who led our Somalia mission in 1992, and was later excoriated for "inappropriate leadership" during the death- and torture-plagued operation—to the rank of brigadier general, thereby increasing his pension and pay.

Perfect stocking stuffers!

Some marketing genius found a way to encourage kids to play with fire: manufacture cigarette lighters shaped like skateboards, cellphones and even Sparky the Fire Dog.

Tusk, tusk

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species permitted cash-strapped southern African nations to sell off 108 tonnes of stockpiled ivory, with the idea that the profits will be reinvested in conservation. Could this be an incentive to further poaching? Heavens, no!

Plus, he didn't provide receipts

Sandra Bergen successfully sued her drug dealer Chinton Davey for negligence in a Saskatchewan court. His offence? "Getting me hooked when I was vulnerable," said the 23 year-old.

Put your feet in the stirrups, Danny, this won't hurt a bit

Despite upping the pay of other docs by 35 per cent, Newfoundland neglected to increase salaries for its three gynecological oncologists, who resigned. No worries, said the province—we'll airlift patients to the mainland. So much cheaper! After a backlash—the Rock has high death rates of cervical cancer—the premier caved and the docs stayed. M

AP, GETTY, LOUIS VUITTON



‘I THINK—I’LL HAVE MY STAFF GET TO YOU. IT’S CONDOMINIUMS WHERE—I’LL HAVE THEM GET TO YOU.’



—Republican presidential nominee John McCain, unable to tell reporters how many homes he and his wife own. They have at least eight in three states.

‘You destroyed my family. They hate me because of what you did to me.’



—William Mullins-Johnson, to disgraced Ontario pathologist Charles Smith. Before being exonerated, Mullins-Johnson spent 12 years behind bars for killing his four-year-old niece; Smith’s testimony was key to his false conviction.



‘To my supporters, my champions—my sisterhood of the travelling pantsuits—from the bottom of my heart, thank you’

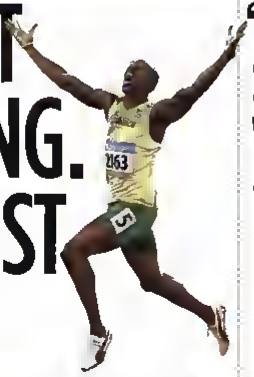
—Presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton, conceding defeat at the Democratic convention

‘War is stupid. Everybody knows that. Well, no they don’t. The politicians don’t know that.’



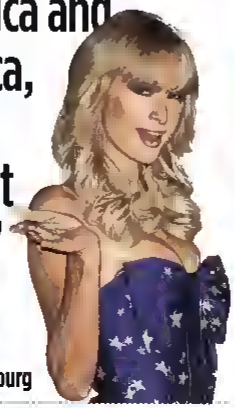
—David Snyder, father of Capt. Jonathan Snyder, who died in Afghanistan in June

‘I WASN’T BRAGGING. I WAS JUST HAPPY.’



—Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, responding to criticism that he celebrated his world record 100-m victory at the Olympics before crossing the finish line

‘I love Africa in general—South Africa and West Africa, they are both great countries’



—Actress and singer Paris Hilton, upon arriving in Johannesburg

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Comebacks

Eric Lamaze
Banned from two previous Olympics for cocaine use, the 40-year-old show jumper from Schomberg, Ont., finally made it to the Games. He and his horse Hickstead won gold and silver medals in Beijing.

Ingrid Betancourt
After being held captive in the Colombian jungle by FARC rebels/narco-terrorists for six years, the former presidential candidate looked gaunt and defeated in her last "proof of life" video. But liberty came suddenly on July 2: the army tricked FARC into putting 15 hostages on a helicopter, and whisked them to safety. The next day, reunited with her now-grown kids, Betancourt likened freedom to "nirvana, paradise."

The Reena Virk trial
Kelly Ellard, now 25, won yet another trial in the 1997 beating and drowning murder of 14-year-old Reena Virk of Saanich, B.C. The Virk family has already endured three trials: one hung jury, two murder convictions, both overturned on appeal. Enough, says the province, which wants the Supreme Court of Canada to overturn the latest retrial decision.

Bears and more bears
Bears were sighted pawing through urban garbage, dining and dashing at the Subway in Kitimat, B.C., mugging hikers and joggers, and one killed a hunter in Alberta. Still, attacks on humans are the exception. Usually, when the two territorial species collide, it's curtains for Yogi.

Kashechewan
Another spring, another flood, another airlift for the 1,900 members of the northern Ontario Cree First Nation. It's the unfortunate legacy of a federal government ordered relocation onto a flood plain in 1957. But Ottawa nixed the idea of relocation last year, and the feds are refusing to hand over millions in rebuilding money while Indian Affairs pores over the natives' accounts.

New Kids On The Block
To every boy band there is a season, turn, turn, turn. A time for gold records, a time for solo work, and now, a time to gather the not-so-hirsute-anymore boys for the inevitable, slightly desperate reunion tour. The Kids' saccharine album, *The Block*, debuted in Billboard's No. 2 spot.

Suburban retro chic
Undies flapping on clotheslines—long verboten in developments—are the new flags of environmental consciousness, while tap water is its official drink. And, of course, the grass is always greener when cut with a push mower.

Ripped van Winkle
Just in time for the Olympics, two icons of Games past—swimmer Mark Spitz and gymnast Nadia Comaneci—signed up to shill for Botox. Even gold medallists, it seems, worry about frown lines.

Karl Marx
His big idea—capitalism is doomed by impoverished workers—is currently playing everywhere. And governments bailing out the banks and big business—isn't that socialism?

GETTY

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Comebacks

Dara Torres
The 41 year old U.S swimmer bagged three silvers at the Olympics, two years after giving birth and eight years since her last Games. Her first appearance: 1984. Most of her Beijing team mates hadn't even been born.

Anwar Ibrahim
Years ago the former deputy PM of Malaysia was jailed on laughable corruption and sodomy charges. Now, he's opposition leader and there's a new sodomy charge and a possible 20 year sentence. Politics and bedfellows—no harmless cliche in Malaysia.

Tampa Bay Rays
How did this baseball team go from dead last in 2007 to the 2008 World Series?! Dropping "devil" from their name? Changing their uniforms? Whatever the case, the remarkable turnaround helped blunt the disappointment after the Philadelphia Phillies rewrote the fairy tale ending, 4-1, in the finals.

Short hair
Posh, Katie Holmes, Rihanna—for these ted carpet strutters, the bob was just a way station en route to a souped-up pixie.

Robert Latimer
The unrepentant Saskatchewan farmer was released on day parole after serving seven years for killing his 12-year-old daughter, Tracy, who was in pain and disabled by cerebral palsy. When asked by a parole board member whether he'd do the same for a terminally ill relative, Latimer, who refuses to apologize for what he says was a mercy killing, responded, "I don't think so."

U find me pls
Via cellphone, injured survivor Bob Pomponio guided rescuers to the site of a Vancouver Island plane crash that claimed five lives. His battery was low and phone reception failed, so he sent texts. Before rescuers arrived, he also received two—both marketing appeals from Telus.

José Ramos-Horta
After a botched assassination attempt by rebels in February, the peace activist president of East Timor recuperated in Australia. Back home now, with lasting nerve damage, he visited his alleged would be killer in jail. "I stared at him. He turned away, embarrassed, and couldn't look me in the eye," said Ramos Horta.

Christina Applegate
The *Married With Children* actress, 37, roared back from has-been status—and cancer and a double mastectomy—with an Emmy nomination for *Samantha Who?* Currently undergoing reconstructive surgery, she vows, "I'm going to have the best boobs in the nursing home."

The white stuff
Much of Canada enjoyed a very white winter, just like the ones we used to know. The nostalgia got old, however, when driveways were still being shovelled in April. Snowfall records across the nation fell like—oh, you get the idea. Even in Victoria, an April accumulation record that had stood since 1940 was broken.

Comfortable clothes
Goodbye skinny jeans and mini-skirts, hello harem pants, maxi dresses and looking pregnant even when you're not.

Robert Downey Jr.
After years in and out of rehab (and jail), and Hollywood hand wringing about untapped potential, the 43-year-old actor delivered, big-time, in *Iron Man*, which raked in US$600 million with a clever combo of cheek and special effects.

Kiefer Sutherland
The actor walked free in January after serving 48 days for his second drunk driving conviction. The *24* star, who worked in the jail's laundry, was called a model prisoner—and colleague he arranged to do his time while his show was on hiatus.

CBC journalist Mellissa Fung was freed from captivity in Afghanistan after spending four weeks in a hole

Bill Reid's treasures
With the price of gold soaring, experts feared the worst when thieves stole 12 pieces, worth an estimated $2 million, of the late Haida artist Bill Reid's gold jewellery and artwork from B.C.'s Museum of Anthropology. Happily, all the pieces were recovered by police. Although several had been damaged, none had been melted down.

John Babcock
Canada's only surviving First World War veteran regained his Canadian citizenship, at age 107, during a ceremony at his home in Spokane, Wash., some 90 years after moving to the U.S. Welcome back, sir. M

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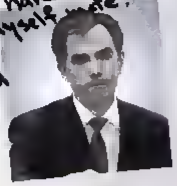
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Political Yearbook

STAFF



STEPHEN HARPER
THE PRINCIPAL
'I like students now'
One sweater vest and a bigger minority later, the iron-fisted PM morphed into Mr. Nice Guy just as the economy crashed and co-operation became vital. His new management style: less conflict, more openness.



JIM PRENTICE
THE GEOGRAPHY TEACHER
'The oil sands are renewable —it just takes longer'
New environment minister is highly dependable, requires little supervision. His real task: defend Alberta's increasingly troubled oil sands when the U.S. moves on the environment.



JIM FLAHERTY
BAKE-SALE ORGANIZER
'Crown assets, anyone? It's for a good cause.'
Finance minister said Ontario's the last place" to invest in, and vowed feds would never run a deficit. Never is over. Now he's "joking" about selling the CN Tower to raise some cash.



LAWRENCE CANNON
THE SUB
'Timetable says I have a spare. What's that?'
Foreign affairs minister wanted no experience necessary; must look good in a suit. French a plus. MacKay, Bernier, Cannon— Harper really values this job!



GARY LUNN
THE CHEMISTRY TEACHER
'Ignore that beeping sound, class, the reactor is fine'
For his fumbling on the Chalk River PR nightmare, the natural resources minister has been sidelined at Sport, just in time to fumble the Olympics.



TONY CLEMENT
DRIVER'S ED INSTRUCTOR
'Observe closely, kids, this is a classic crash and burn'
After years at Health, he landed a big-time ministry. Industry— just in time for the Big Three to fall to their knees and beg for a huge government bailout.



MAXIME BERNIER
THE BACHELOR
'Damn, left my lecture notes at that girl's house again'
The PM said Bernier's bedroom antics were his own business— then it came out the foreign affairs minister left secret docs at the home of a woman with biker ties. He resigned.



LEONA AGLUKKAQ
THE SCHOOL NURSE
'Ottawa is nice and warm, no excuse for getting sick here'
The no-nonsense health minister is new to Parliament but not the portfolio. In Nunavut, she ran one of the best public health programs in the country.



MARK CARNEY
THE JANITOR
'Found the economy, Mr. Harper. It was in the toilet.'
Outspoken Bank of Canada boss warned of possible recession, lambasted selfish banking execs, cut interest rates and upped the money supply. Busy guy.

STUDENTS



AITT
T MINER'S TER
'Tpitin' words'
Disp ew minister of natu es headed the Toro uthority, where she uild a bridge to the ort. Dislikes big ? opposition



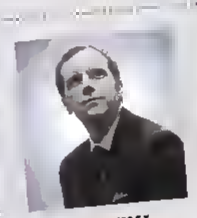
JEAN CHAREST
THE UGLY DUCKLING
'Since I developed, even Mario's pals like me'
Quebec's premier once reviled, learned to compromise, re-branded self the "defender of Quebec's interests" and even attracted two ADQ defectors. Fairy-tale ending: great polls.



JOHN SAIRD
THE BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEM
'No, I haven't considered Ritalin. Why do you ask?'
As part of Harper's mean shift, this brawler was shuffled to (less visible) Transport. If he fixes infrastructure, he'll be mainstreamed again.



ABETH MAY
E VEOAN
're it's even ethical otables, actually'
ito the debates and –but angered party urging voters who omach Green to vote ! Result: no seats.



BRAD WALL
THE TEACHER'S PET
'Golly, Mr. Harper, your sweater vest is cool'
Saskatchewan's premier has the best economic track record in the country, and his economy is diversifying. No wonder the Prime Minister is a fan.



MARIO DUMONT
THE SCREW UP
'I coulda been a contender'
The ADQ leader who launched a political earthquake in Que bec now faces extinction. He failed to convince voters (and some in his party) that right-wing populism is the answer.



DAVID EMERSON
DESIGNATED DRIVER
asy to leave a party if 're in the driver's seat'
ex-Liberal became the Tory, taking over foreign irs after Bernier and co-ng the national campaign ugh he chose not to run.



JACK LAYTON
THE SURFER DUDE
'Hey man, I'm going to be principal someday. Really.'
Had a good election but emerged with 37 seats, no closer to running the country. Still believes something called the "new strong" will prevail.

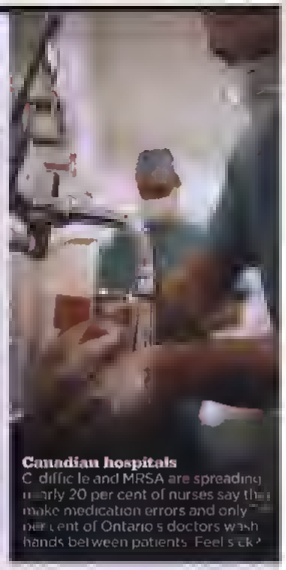


STÉPHANE D
THE NERI
'Hey guys, instead let's have an e
The political scier loser candidate misguided Green boat with bad id even worse inst

Hot spots



Kenya
Tribal violence erupted after a dodgy election, killing hundreds, displacing hundreds of thousands and igniting fears of another Rwanda



Canadian hospitals
C. difficile and MRSA are spreading, nearly 20 per cent of nurses say they make medication errors and only per cent of Ontario's doctors wash hands between patients. Feel sick?



The Arctic
As the polar ice melts, the battle for sovereignty heats up: Canada, Russia, the U.S., Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland are all jostling for a piece of the resource-rich region



Mexico
Warring drug cartels are wreaking havoc, bumping off each other and anyone else who gets in the way of the trade, making the country an increasingly dangerous vacation spot

CAPTIVATING STORIES OR CROWDED STORES



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Oops

We tried the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, but it was too hard
An unemployed French couple came up with a money-making scheme selling videos of their sexcapades at places like the Vimy Ridge war memorial. Canadian Web surfers tipped off French authorities, who found the couple guilty of exhibitionism and ordered them to buy an ad publicizing their conviction.

Some encore
Violin virtuoso David Garrett tried to avoid the crowds after a concert in London by running down the stairs. He lost his footing and fell on his violin, smashing the million-dollar instrument. The repair estimate is $120,000.

Because nothing says 'jihad' like a cruller
When perky chef Rachael Ray sported a fringed scarf in a Dunkin' Donuts ad, conservatives, mistaking it for the Arab kaffiyeh favoured by Yasser Arafat, accused her of promoting jihad. The scarf was actually a designer paisley pattern.

'But we have the utmost respect for those people!'
In February, Spanish racing fans turned up at the track in blackface, mocking F1 phenom Lewis Hamilton. Oh, they said, that's not racism—that's funny! The Iberian sense of humour was on display again during the Olympics, when three separate teams of athletes posed for photos mocking Asians' "slitty eyes."

Worst-case scenario, we have a new ski jump
In the midst of a $600-million plus upgrade of the Sea-to-Sky Highway, intended to placate fears of a landslide during the 2010 Games, the geologically dubious hillside above the main route between Vancouver and Whistler gave way in July.

My party's gonna be a riot
Jodie Hudson wanted her Sweet 16 to be "party of the year," so she announced it on her Facebook page. Hundreds of partiers turned up at her family's $9-million mansion in Marbella, Spain, to toss TVs in the pool and render the home uninhabitable. Jodie has been grounded.

Open concept design
After Canada poured millions into upgrading the Kandahar prison, the Taliban decided to do a little renovation of their own, blowing out a few of the facility's walls. Twelve hundred prisoners escaped.

And now he wonders why he can't get a date
Vancouver-born Edison Chen sent his laptop to the shop for repairs. Next thing you know, nude photos of the actor/pop star mixing it up with high-profile Hong Kong starlets began circulating on the Web, creating a brouhaha. Chen's career is now on hold, as, presumably, is his sex life.

Move over, Maxwell Smart
In an attempt to improve the public image of the British spy service, an MI6 agent went on camera for the first time—disguised, of course. The heat of the TV lights, however, caused a fake moustache malfunction, unmasking his identity midway through the interview.

A new take on recycling
Alberta recently announced that up to 2,700 patients need to be tested for HIV—a health centre in High Prairie had been reusing syringes for years. M

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Finally



RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS APOLOGY
After a century of forced assimilation via church run federally funded schools the Prime M nis ter apologized on behalf of the nation for the last ing and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture heritage and language



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- Chef and musician ROGER MOOKING
- Astronaut JULIE PAYETTE
- COLIN MACDONALD of the Trews

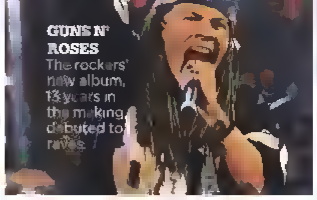
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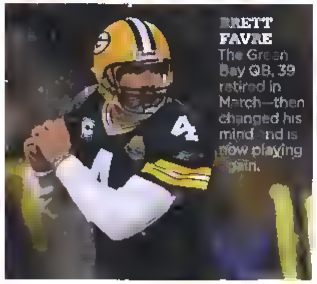
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HENRY MORGENTALER
Two decades after Canada's abortion law was struck down, its leading proponent/ practitioner received the Order of Canada



GUNS N' ROSES
The rockers' new album, 13 years in the making, debuted to raves



BRETT FAVRE
The Green Bay QB, 39 retired in March—then changed his mind and is now playing again.



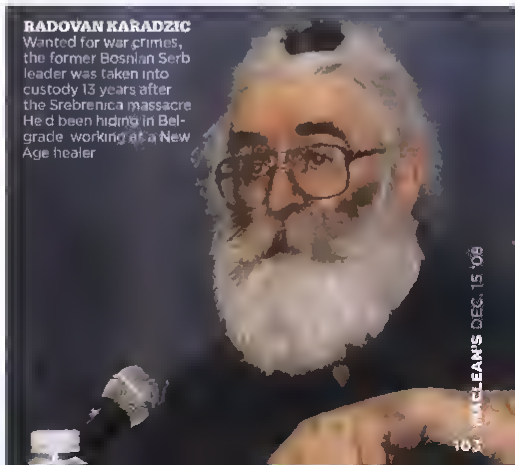
'SEX AND THE CITY' MOVIE
The long delayed chick flick based on the TV show was a massive hit despite lousy reviews

Finally

After insisting for years that Prince Philip ordered the car crash that killed Dodi Al Fayed and Princess Di, **Mohamed Al Fayed** accepted the results of a coroner's inquest their chauffeur was drunk. A Pentagon-sponsored review of 600,000 Iraqi documents found no operational link between **Saddam Hussein** and **al Qaeda**. tobacco-loving **France** banned smoking in bistros, discos and "places of conviviality". Actor/director **Paul Gross** started work on *Passchendaele*, his First World War epic, 12 years ago, in September, it opened the Toronto International Film Festival. **Julia Child**, the beloved American chef who died in 2004, was revealed to have been a U.S spy during the Second World War. According to new DNA tests of evidence in the **JonBenet Ramsey** murder case, her family absolutely did not kill the child beauty queen. A deal to develop **Hebron**, the offshore oil field discovered nearly 30 years ago, was signed after Big Oil gave in to the Newfoundland government's demand for a 4.9 per cent equity stake. The **Church of England** apologized to Charles Darwin, 126 years after his death, for insisting that humans didn't descend from apes. **Momin Khawaja**, the first Canadian charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act, was found guilty of financing and facilitating terrorism, he was helping Muslim extremists who were plotting attacks in Britain. Canada is at last creating a **national organ donor system**, in 2007, 4,195 people were waiting for transplants. University student Elizabeth Bain disappeared 18 years ago and her boyfriend, **Robert Baltovich**, was finally found not guilty of her murder on the opening day of his retrial, after the Crown announced it wouldn't present any evidence. The International Committee of the Red Cross unlocked its vast archive of **Holocaust documents**, long off limits to researchers. Livent co-founder **Garth Drabinsky** went on trial for fraud, years after his entertainment empire collapsed. Launched in 1967, Canard's iconic QE2, which shipped royalty and stars, put into port for the last time. **Hollinger Inc.**, once Conrad Black's holding company, was delisted from the TSX five months after he went to prison. M



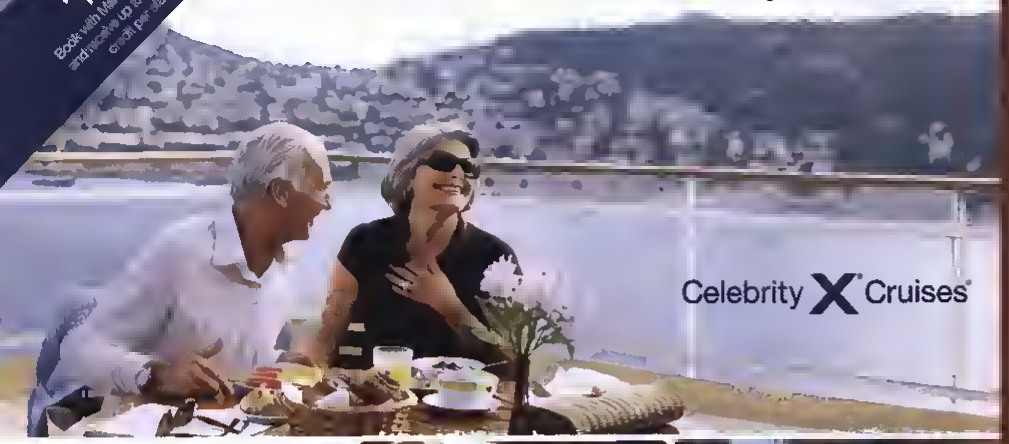
HADIJATOU MANI
After years of slavery in Niger she sued the government for failing to protect her winning $25,000 plus freedom for herself and her kids



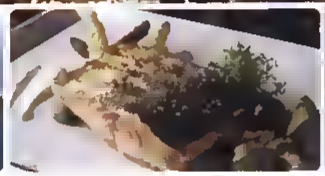
RADOVAN KARADZIC
Wanted for war crimes, the former Bosnian Serb leader was taken into custody 13 years after the Srebrenica massacre. He'd been hiding in Belgrade working at a New Age healer

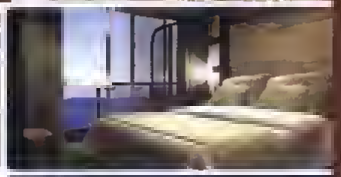
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Celebrations

Your time for **family** and **friends**



In the spirit of the sights, sounds and flavours of your most cherished celebrations, we take this occasion to honour the diversity of holiday traditions — old, new, and yet-to-be-started. Whatever your plans this season, chances are they will combine food, family, festive reunions and an invigorating start to the new year.

Even as traditions change and evolve within families, communities, cultures and the country, our shared past and rituals are a force that holds us together in spirit while strengthening a sense of belonging.

To catch a glimpse of our country's rich diversity of cultural celebrations, we recently turned the dial to OMNI, Canada's leading family of multilingual/multicultural regional broadcasters. We asked six of the popular hosts and staff of OMNI programs to share their thoughts and memories of their own favourite family holiday traditions.



Family table spans three continents



Clara Abreu
Host/Reporter, OMNI News
Portuguese Edition

For many Canadian families, holiday celebrations are a time to serve up a flavourful cultural stew, as traditions are blended or embellished with each generation.

At Clara Abreu's family table, recipes and traditions span three continents. "When I came to Canada about 23 years ago, we mixed all of our traditions together to celebrate Christmas – Portuguese, African and Canadian," says Abreu, host and reporter for OMNI News Portuguese Edition in Ontario.

Born and raised in Mozambique, Abreu remembers Christmas Day as being hot and sunny and, as a child, celebrating at the beach with her family.

"It was always a big picnic of 30 or 40 people with my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins," she says.

Abreu's parents now live in Portugal, where she attended university, so just her immediate family, including her husband and three children, are here in Canada. "My parents find it too cold here, so we are just a small family of five. But it's nice and cozy, and we stay home for Christmas," says Abreu.

For Christmas dinner, Abreu cooks codfish, a Portuguese tradition, as well as curried shrimp, a popular dish in Mozambique. "But then we have turkey, since that's a North American tradition, and we enjoy bolo rei, which is a Portuguese Christmas cake with nuts, almonds and fruit."

Home decorations include a nativity scene in the Portuguese Catholic tradition, although Abreu says her grown children regard this more as decorative than religious. "They still respect it, but it doesn't mean the same thing to them as it does to me," she says.

And while Christmas in Canada is colder and smaller in scale than her childhood celebrations, Abreu says it's still fun. "You know how it is at this time of year – you just want to be surrounded by the people you love."

Cooking up a lucky start to Lunar New Year



Wei Lee
Host/Reporter, OMNI News
Mandarin Edition

Finding out who would bite into the "lucky" dumpling was always an exciting start to the year's most important holiday celebrations for Wei Lee and his family. Lee, host/reporter of OMNI News: Mandarin Edition in Ontario, says that even though he is from Taiwan, his parents followed a northern Chinese tradition of making dumplings for the Lunar New Year family feast.

"The food is different for this celebration, depending on whether you are from northern or southern China," says Lee. Plus, there's a trick! "We always put a coin into one of the dumplings and whoever got it would be the luckiest person for the year."







Chinese New Year starts with the new moon on the first day and ends on the full moon some two weeks later. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are celebrated as a family affair and time of reunion. The preparations for these festivities are an important part of this observance.

"Every member of the family helps clean the house for Lunar New Year," says Lee. Tradition holds that this cleaning sweeps away any bad luck of the preceding year, preparing the home for good fortune.

In the kitchen, a scroll is hung bearing a word such as "full." "This is in the hopes that the kitchen would always be full of food. I would put a piece [of that scroll] in my wallet hoping it would always be full!" he says.

Lee says, more than anything else, he looks forward to the warm atmosphere of sitting around a fire on New Year's Eve with his wife, two daughters and other family members. Technology helps keep these traditional family ties, says Lee. "If family members can't join us in our home, we use a web cam to talk to them over the Internet."

Italian traditions proudly on display



Vincenzo Somme
Associate Producer/Anchor, OMNI News
Italian Edition

In Naples, Italy, the Christmas season is famously marked by hundreds of nativity scenes displayed in churches and homes throughout the city. As a child, Vincenzo Somma, associate producer/anchor of OMNI News: Italian Edition, used to create a whole nativity village out of paper for his family, anticipating a month-long series of celebrations, from December 8 and the feast of the Immaculate Conception, to January 6, and exchanging of gifts for the Epiphany.

Since moving to Canada, the Somma household has included a nativity scene in its entranceway every year at Christmas. "It's already two or three feet wide!" says Somma, who adds something new every year, making it more and more elaborate.

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Somma and his wife have worked hard to preserve old family customs, he says, creating a sense of occasion for their two sons, age 17 and 23. "Some of the traditions do change. You make your own and add new things because you are exposed to a different culture," says Somma.

At one time, his sons questioned why their parents went to so much trouble for these celebrations. "But you can see the appreciation coming back and they actually like it now," says Somma. "I hope they will carry on some of the traditions – I think they will," he says.

For now, Somma looks forward to gathering family at home on Christmas day for a feast of as many as 11 dishes, plus his famous homemade wine. One traditional recipe did not survive the transition to Canada. "I used to cook fried eel, but no one likes it, and my wife doesn't like to even see it, since you have to buy it alive!" says Somma. He laughs, recalling a childhood memory in Italy when the Christmas eel got loose before it could be cooked. "Everyone was looking all over the house for it. It was really funny – especially in Neapolitan dialect!"

Cultural festivals inspire love of dance



Sudha Krishnan
Anchor, OMNI News South Asian (OMNI in Alberta)

The most widely celebrated occasion in India is Divali, the Festival of Lights, which takes place in late autumn. "Divali is a really big thing for the Indian community", says Sudha Krishnan, anchor of OMNI News, South Asian Edition in Alberta. Divali is considered to be a festival for the renewal of life, and remembrance of family. A common custom is to throw out old lamps and bring in new ones to help light the way to heaven for ancestors.

Krishnan was born and raised in Canada, but both her parents are from South India, so family celebrations here are often a mix of cultural traditions, such as having a Christmas dinner with a traditional Indian vegetarian meal.

Growing up, she says, there was always a big community event such as a variety show to mark Divali. "My mother was an Indian

TIME-HONOURED TRADITIONS

A taste of feasts and celebrations from around the world

One Chinese tradition stipulates that **all food be prepared in advance of the Lunar New Year** so that sharp knives could be put away to avoid cutting the "luck" during the celebrations.

The 15th day of the Chinese New Year is called the **Lantern Festival**, celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

Days before the Divali celebration in India, **women traditionally decorate floors and front entrances by drawing "carpets" of rice powder** in intricate designs of birds, flowers and other patterns.

Icelanders have not one, but **thirteen Santas**, or Yule Lads. The friendly descendants of trolls

Iceland's folklore calls for everyone to get one new piece of clothing in time for Christmas or **risk being eaten by a malicious beast** known as the Christmas Cat.

The **Kwanzaa** festival celebrating African-American heritage was first celebrated in 1966 in the U.S. Its name, inspired by a Swahili phrase meaning **"first fruits"**

The Kwanzaa feast, known as a **Karamu**, is held on Dec. 31 and features foods from Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas, representing a **collective heritage**.

During three days of celebration at the end of Ramadan, Muslims throughout the world rejoice having completed **a month of intense spiritual renewal**.

It is traditional for Muslim families to donate food to the poor in the last few days of Ramadan, to **ensure that the needy have something to eat** in the celebration of breaking the fast.

The ancient Romans brought evergreen plants into their homes to celebrate Saturnalia, **a days-long feast and celebration to honour Saturn**, the god of agriculture.

It is believed that **fruitcake was originally created as a wedding cake** sometime in the Middle Ages.

We know it as Groundhog Day, but Feb. 2 is also Candlemass Day, widely celebrated in Mexico, where **tamales and hot chocolate** are foods of choice.

Olive oil is integral to Hanukkah food traditions, since the celebration is based on the believed miracle of one day's worth of lamp oil (pure olive oil) lasting for eight days.

Eggnog has been associated with Christmas and New Year's celebrations since the **19th century**. It can be mixed with wine, brandy, rum, bourbon or sherry.

Celebrating the **winter solstice** is an ancient rite that greatly influenced many modern celebrations.

If you are in Sweden on Lucia Day, Dec. 13, you may be awakened by **children singing traditional songs**.



classical dancer so we always performed for it," says Krishnan, who herself is an accomplished student of dance. She and her sister would look forward to dressing up and participating in such festivities. "The hall would be filled with people and we would dance in circles. It would get faster and faster. The next day our feet would be so sore!" she recalls.

Another important holiday for the Krishnan family is Vishu, a sort of New Year's celebration. The eve of this Hindu festival is marked by placing precious offerings to the divine, in a ritual arrangement in the home.

Krishnan recalls celebrating Vishu at the humble home of her aunt and uncle who, the night before, would take everything they owned – jewelry, clothing, pots and pans – and put it in front of the mirror in the living room.

"They didn't have a lot," recalls Krishnan. "But the next morning we would walk to the living room with our eyes closed. When we opened them, we would see everything. Even if you didn't have a lot, it looked like more because of the mirror. The idea was to start the new year off by appreciating what we have."

Respect to traditions draws family closer



Arkie Lau
Anchor, OMNI News Cantonese Edition

In Hong Kong, the Lunar New Year celebration is quite simply the biggest, loudest and longest party of the year. Days prior, throngs fill the flower shops of the night markets, looking for an auspicious bloom to bring luck for the year. "People usually buy manjari plants, which represent good luck, so almost every house or family would have a pot," recalls Arkie Lau, anchor of OMNI News, Cantonese Edition, who now lives in Alberta. Other symbols of prosperity include kumquat trees, narcissus plants and peonies, while peach blossoms are said to add fire to romance.

For Lau, the Hong Kong scene and much of her extended family is now far away, but the importance of the occasion and its traditions has been brought with her to Canada.

"Only my husband and daughter are here in Canada, but we still celebrate the Lunar New Year with friends," she says. Holiday activities for the Laus include a feast of fish, chicken and sticky rice, joining friends for dim sum, and a few competitive matches of Mahjong, the traditional Chinese table game using sets of tiles.

While the first day of traditional Lunar New Year celebrations is usually reserved for family, each day progresses with its own rituals.

On the first day of the new year, older adults give younger, unmarried people what Lau calls "packet" money: the little red envelopes that contain money, intended to bring luck and suppress evil spirits. Also on the first day, a wife visits her mother-in-law. The husband visits his mother-in-law on day two. "This is how the younger generation shows their respect," Lau says.

In Hong Kong, a grand fireworks display heralds the second day of the New Year. In Chinese Canadian communities, too, there is usually a big show and the traditional lion and dragon dance, says Lau. "The drum and cymbals, together with the face of the dragon or lion dancing aggressively, is believed to ward off bad or evil spirits."

Joyous street gathering unites generations



Jasdip Wahl
Anchor, OMNI News Punjabi Edition

The Sikh New Year, known as Vaisakhi, is celebrated worldwide on April 13 or 14 and honours the faith's beginnings in 1699. In Canada, it's embraced as a cultural and community event as much as a religious one, and also recognized as a harvest festival.

"It's our biggest celebration," says Jasdip Wahla, anchor of OMNI News' Punjabi Edition in British Columbia, who usually takes part in media coverage of the day's biggest celebration of all in Canada: Surrey's Vaisakhi parade. That event attracts as many 100,000 people of many faiths who gather to celebrate traditional values of tolerance, friendship and mutual respect.

As a child in Punjab state, Wahla recalls the Vaisakhi procession being celebrated with exuberance. He remembers "hundreds of thousands of people" lining the streets to observe a spectacle of martial arts, performers standing up on horseback, and people dressed in the elaborate outfits and turbans of the 1700s.

In Canada, Wahla, his wife and three-year-old son mark the day by attending their temple and following the parades in Surrey and Vancouver. "We are always with our families for this," says Wahla, whose parents often come to visit from the U.S.

"It's a very colourful celebration with lots of people wearing blue and saffron turbans. Saffron is the colour of sacrifice and is for our peace and prosperity. There are many floats, and lots of sharing of food," he says. Indeed, it's a day to enjoy the best of Punjabi cuisine that may include dishes like Tandoori Chicken or deep-fried Bhatura. ■

On behalf of *Maclean's* and the featured hosts of OMNI, our sincere best wishes for a holiday filled with family and friends, and celebrations that fill your heart and draw communities together.

OBEY GIANT, GETTY, NEWSCOM, IMAGEFORUM

PLASTIC BABY BOTTLES
Canada labelled bisphenol A toxic and stores yanked everything from sippy cups to soothers

THE CHANGE MANTRA
First Obama championed "change" than Clinton and even McCain got on the bandwagon

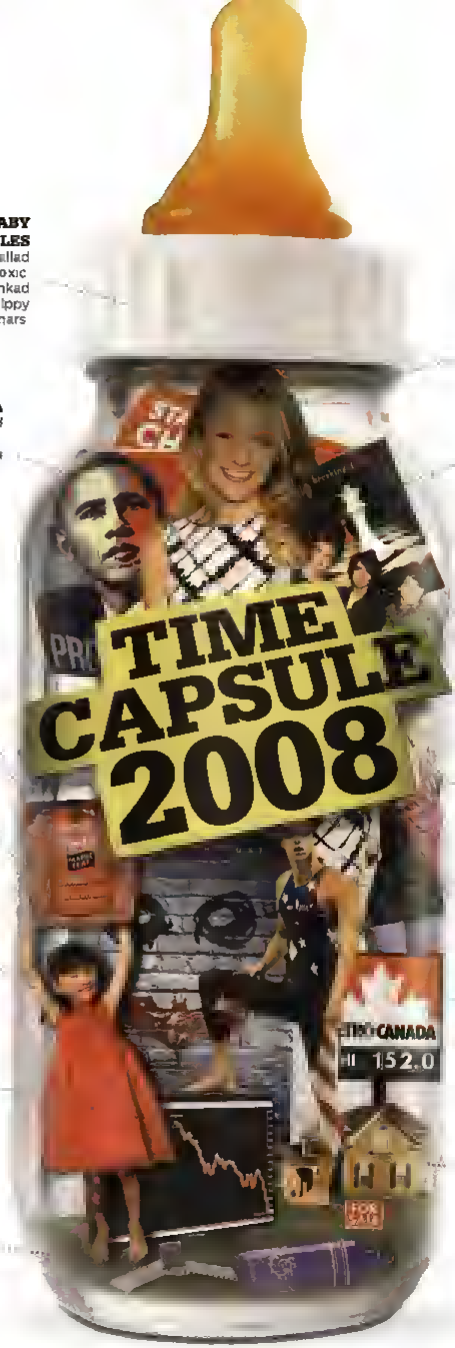
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Heath Ledger's creepy Joker helped the summer megahit earn US$1 billion worldwide

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The horror blockbuster of the year: the world economy

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High society teens in New York took over TV—and the mental real estate of the blog gen

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Olympians smashed records in the one-piece, though wriggling into it is an ordeal

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CRATERING HOUSING PRICES
Remember when your house was going to pay for your retirement?

THE END



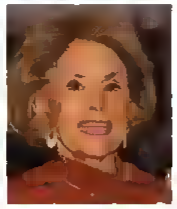
GEOFFREY BALLARD
75, Fuel cell inventor



SHEELA BASRUR
51, Public health officer



THOMAS BATA
93, Businessman



CYD CHARISSE
86, Actress



MICHAEL CRICHTON
66, Author



MICHAEL DEBAKEY
99, Heart surgeon



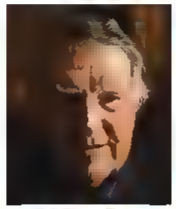
BO DIDDLEY
79, Musician



BOBBY FISCHER
64, Chess master



JEFF HEALEY
41, Musician



EDMUND HILLARY
88, Adventurer



HEATH LEDGER
28, Actor



BON LANCASTER
69, CFL quarterback



DORIAN LEIGH
91, Supermodel



EDWARD LORENZ
90, Father of chaos theory



MIRIAM MAKEBA
76, Singer/activist



PAUL NEWMAN
83, Actor/philanthropist



YVES SAINT LAURENT
71, Designer



IRENA SENDLER
98, Holocaust heroine



LYDIA SHUM
60, Actress/comedienne



ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN
89, Author



SUHARTO
86, Indonesian dictator



JOHN TEMPLETON
99, Mutual fund founder



CLAUDE THÉBEROE
73, Artist



BEN WEIDER
85, Bodybuilder



JOHN WHEELER
90, Co-inventor of nuclear fission theory

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